SUN-WORSHIP IN ANCIENT INDIA

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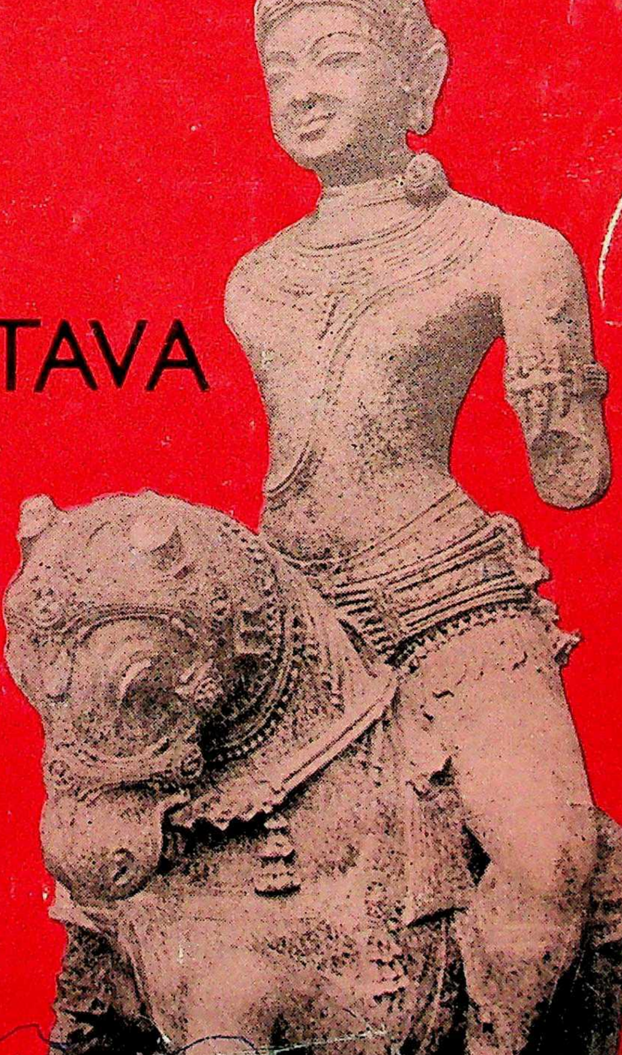
V. C. SRIVASTAVA



SUN-WORSHIP IN ANCIENT INDIA

Foreword By Prof. A. L. Basham.
Introduction By Prof. G. R. Sharma.

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Dedicated
To
Mother

FOREWORD

While now there are no significant temples of the sun god still in worship in India, it is clear that at one time Sūrya, worshipped under many names, had numerous devotees and splendid temples all over India. Indeed what seems to have been the largest Hindu temple ever to be constructed, the great temple of Konārak, was dedicated to him.

It is surprising that hitherto comparatively little work has been done on ancient Indian sun worship by Indian scholars. I am very glad that Dr. Srivastava has done much to meet the need by his thorough and detailed survey of the subject. He has dealt with pre-Vedic and Vedic evidence, and has carried the story down to medieval times. His survey will be of great help to all students of Indian religious history.

A. L. Basham
Australian National University,
Canberra.

April, 1972.

INTRODUCTION

The historical study of religion and mythology which represented one of the most significant forms of social consciousness in early ages, is of singular importance for the relatively full knowledge of the ancient and medieval worlds. The growing realization of the value of this kind of study has been the natural outcome of the growth and expansion of historical consciousness in modern times. In the present work Dr. V. C. Srivastava has studied a religious system which has not received as much attention from the scholars as it should have done. The work presents successfully a historical study of Sun-worship in ancient India right from its earliest beginning in the protohistoric period to its maturity in the early medieval period (8th-13th century A. D.); and is the first of its kind, being based on a thorough, critical examination of a wide range of literary sources and the correlation of the data gleaned from them with an equally wide range of archaeological data.

The concern of history is not only the individual and the particular, it also attempts to investigate the relation between them and the general. Here the author has succeeded in rising above the variations of ideas and forms in the sphere of Sun-worship due to the factors of time and space, and in relating the individual and the particular, as gleaned from the archaeological and also literary sources, to the leading trends and tendencies of different phases. He is not wedded to any extreme ideology of historical interpretation and sees the development of a religious system as a product of diverse spiritual and socio-economic forces.

Besides giving new information about the indigenous traditions of Sun-worship in ancient India, the work throws valuable and interesting light on the antiquity and the extent of the rôle of the Irānian Magian priests in its development, on the nature and influence of the syncretic tendency, on the Hellenistic impact in the origin of Sun-images, and on the various factors and stages in the evolution of this form of worship in the wider social and religious context.

Dr. Srivastava has presented his findings in a lucid style and well-arranged fashion. I am glad to have the opportunity of introducing his study to the world of indology. I am sure, scholars interested in indology, will receive this valuable work well.

G. R. Sharma
Professor and Head of the Department of Ancient History, Culture &
Archaeology, University of
Allahabad.

April, 1972.

PREFACE

The Sun has attracted the attention of mankind for adoration all over the world from the very beginning of human history. It has attained the position of pre-eminence among the deities of nature in ancient times. The prominence and glory of the solar orb, its beauty and splendour, its importance in the creation and maintenance of life, its regularity in diffusing light and enlightening the whole earth, its primal role in the cosmic evolution and consequent mystery surrounding it, had secured for the Sun a history of interest and importance equalled by none to which every age and every race has contributed its pages. It was this realization which led Sir William Jones, E. B. Tylor, W. T. Olcott and many others to suggest that one great fountain of all idolatory in the four quarters of the globe was the veneration paid by men to the Sun.

A firm conviction in the divinity and worship of the Sun has formed an essential feature of the religious and spiritual consciousness of Indians throughout their history. In India Sun-worship originated as early as the Neolithic period as in other countries. Its worship by means of symbols continued to be an integral part of the religious life of the protohistoric peoples. The advent of the Āryans brought new streams of religious thought which contained a strong belief in the divinity of the Sun. The Vedic Āryans adored it under various forms and names-Sūrya, Savitri, Mitra, Viṣṇu, Pūṣan, Aśvins, Ādityas, Rohita, Vivasvat etc. by means of recitation of hymns of praise and prayer; and oblations and libations. It figured prominently in the Brāhmaṇic rituals. In the Upaniṣads the Sun is regarded as the best manifestation of the supreme power. Sun-worship of the Indo-Āryans had a powerful spiritual back-ground. The intermingling of the Āryan and non-Āryan traditions of Sun-worship led to the emergence of a Sun-sect mentioned for the first time in the *Mahābhārata*. It's antiquity may be pushed back to the 5th-4th cent.

B. C. It had derived inspiration from both the streams At this very time the Sun-worshipping Irānian (Medean) priests known as Magas appeared to have entered into the north-western India—a fact which must have helped in the evolution of the Sun-sect. The Magian tradition became quite popular in the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa period and was ultimately responsible for popularising the traditions of Sun-images and temples. In the Gupta period the Magas came to be recognised even by the orthodox sections of Hindu society. In the Purāṇic Sun-worship all these traditions—indigenous, Āryan and Magian are intermingled. There is an effort, as is customary with the Purāṇas, to harmonise these divergent traditions and present a synthetic picture of the Sun-cult under the Indian grab. The popular side of Purāṇic Sun-worship is represented by many solar *vratas* and *tīrthas* mentioned in the Purāṇas. The sectarian Sun-worship is fully reflected in the later Purāṇas like the *Bhaviṣya* and *Sāmba*. From the 8th cent. A. D. onwards Tāntric traditions came to exert powerful influence on the Sun-cult particularly on its methodology as we find references to Tāntric practices in Sun-worship. At this very time Śaiva ideology and practices also came to overpower the Sun-cult so much so that common worshipper failed to find any difference between Sūrya and Śiva. Even an intellectual fell a prey to such indiscrimination as a Śaivite Purāṇa is actually entitled *Sūrya-Purāṇa*. This brief review shows that there was hardly any period of ancient Indian history when Sun-worship would have been non-existent. It is on account of this that it had been described as the real religion of India, the only one which has really been able to rival those of Viṣṇu and Śiva and the most powerful of all these religions of the Hindus. It was so prominent and all-pervasive in ancient India that a school of solar mythologists arose in modern times to explain the origin of most of the Vedic gods on solar basis.

Sun-worship in ancient India has been significant from many points of view. The continuity of Sun-worship from the prehistoric times to the present day and its universality and popularity among all classes of human society make its study as one of the most illuminating topics of indology. The *Gāyatrī* hymn dedicated to Savitri—the Sun-god in his aspect of stimulation, enjoined to every twice born Hindu and practised by many everyday from Rigvedic to modern times, is a positive proof of the continuity and universality of Sun-worship in its elevated and spiritual aspect. Likewise the practice of *arghya* to the solar orb in many domestic as well as funeral rites of every Hindu even after the lapse of thousands of years after its beginning in the Vedic age is symptomatic of the vitality, strength and vigour of Sun-worship in India. Further, the prominent role that the Sun-gods played in many vows and rituals of the Hindus is an indication of its popularity among all sections of Indian society. In the high philosophy of India the Sun was regarded as the best symbol of the supreme reality. In its orb there is a *Puruṣa* who is the personal aspect of that ultimate power which resides in his *Puruṣa* and which is everywhere. In spite of this philosophy Sun-worship is one of the simplest systems of religious belief. There is no subtle and complicated philosophy behind its worship, no costly ritual is needed to please the Sun-god, no high mysticism is developed in this system. Its worship revolved round the simple affair of offering water and flower to the orb, and recitation of *mantras*. The public-worship of the Sun developed on the lines of other cult-deities like Viṣṇu and Śiva but it is the non-sectarian, general worship of the Sun which is the real soul of the solar religion.

Broadly speaking, there may be two types of approach to the study of Sun-worship in ancient India. The study of basic ideals and conceptions underlying Sun-worship in different periods may form one approach. The literary evidence is of primary importance for this type of study. However, the iconographic and archaeological evidences are to be taken into account to corroborate and confirm the data gleaned from literature. Another approach may be to deal with local cult—details as is evidenced by various regional iconographical and archaeological pieces. In the present work I have approached the subject from the first point of view. My aim has been to trace the successive development of the basic ideals of Sun-worship as reflected primarily in the Brāhmaṇic literature of India as is clear from chapters—III, IV and V. The non-Brāhmaṇic literature, the archaeological, iconographical and epigraphic evidences have been taken into account (Chapters II, VI and Appendix A) with a view to confirming and corroborating the data gleaned from the Brāhmaṇic sources.

The present work is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is concerned with a sort of stock-taking of the works done on the subject in the past. The second chapter gives an account of the various symbols and forms of Sun-worship in prehistoric and protohistoric cultures of India and leads us to the conclusion that Sun-worship had its earliest beginning in the Neolithic age and its infant stage has been reached in the protohistoric period. Thus it is historically not correct to begin the story of Sun-worship from the Rigvedic period. The third chapter deals with the Vedic tradition of Sun-worship on the basis of Vedic literature supported by *Avestā and* Indo-European and Indo-Irānian mythology. It discusses the solar basis of many Vedic gods-Sūrya, Savitri, Mitra, Viṣṇu, Pūṣan, Vivasvat, Ādityas, Aśvins, Rohita. Veṇa-etc. on the basis of *Rigveda,* later Saṁhitās, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads and Kalpasūtras. From this discussion the Vedic concept of the Sun-god has been brought to light. It is suggested, contrary to the prevailing view, that from the very beginning a highly spiritual concept of the Sun-god was developed by the Vedic Āryans. It has been shown that there existed a class of saints who were particularly devoted to Sun-worship and probably this devotion was a family heritage to them. This feature becomes quite marked in the later Vedic age. It cannot be suggested that there was a Sun-sect at this time but it is probable that Sun-worship was well on its way to sectarian road which ultimately culminated in the Epic stream of Sun-sect. The Vedic worship was domestic and aniconic. No doubt certain symbols came to be developed to serve as temporary images in this stage. The fourth chapter discusses the origin, antiquity and nature of the Sun-sect along with the features and qualities of the Sun-god in the Epics. The Epic data are corroborated by early Buddhist and Jain literatures, Pāṇini and Patañjali and early coinage and iconography. It is shown that the Magas may have been present in north-western India in the 5th-4th centuries B. C. when the Epics may have been written atleast in their nucleus form. The Epic Sun-worship foreshadows the Purāṇic trends and thus serves as a link between the Vedic tradition and the Purāṇic world. The chapter fifth traces the basic features of Sun-worship of the Purāṇic world. It has been subdivided into two parts—Early Purāṇic world and later Purāṇic world. In the first part the continuance of the Vedic and Epic traits is critically analysed. The early Purāṇas contain many new features of the Sun-cult such as the development of solar vows and festivals and the tacit approval of the iconic tradition. In the second part the growth of the Sun-sect with all its paraphernalia such as the development of a sectarian *saura* literature, code of conduct for Sun-worshippers, complicated ritual of the Sun-cult etc., is critically examined. The problem of the antiquity, nature and extent of influence of the Magas[1] which is one of the much debated questions of indology has been taken up in this section. A rather unconventional view has been suggested in this matter in the sense that the 5th cent. B. C. has been fixed as the probable period when the Magas appear to have entered into India for the first time in the wake of the Achaemenian invasion though they may have remained confined to north-western part of India. They appear to have failed to exert any appreciable impact on the Sun-cult. The second wave of the Magas which appears to have been a much come in the 7th cent. A. D. in the wake of Parsee influx in the wake of the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa invaders. This time they reached the very heart of India and were successful on account of royal patronage to them in developing the iconic and temple-traditions of the Sun-cult. The third wave appears to have come in the 7th cent. A.D. in the wake of Parsee influx in

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[1] It is regretted that Heinrich von Stietencron's *Indische Sonnenpriester Sāmba und die Śakadvīpīya-Brāhmaṇa* (in German) Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, came to be available to me too late for consideration in this publication.

India and this time they came to be called the Yājakas or Bhojakas. The syncretic tendency in the Sun-cult is reviewed and the impact of Tāntric mode of worship is also discussed in this chapter. The Purāṇic data are corroborated by secular literature, icons, foreigners' accounts and digest literature. The chapter sixth deals with the representations of Sūrya in ancient Indian art, and also the material remains of the Sun-cult. Firstly, the representations of the Sun on early coins, seals and terracottas have been discussed with a view to understanding the necessary back-ground for the emergence of the iconic tradition of the Sun-cult. The study of solar iconography has been done under four periods-early, Kuṣāṇ, Gupta and early mediaeval. The problem of Hellenistic influence in the origin of Sun-images had been examined. The Irānian traits in the Sun-images of the Kuṣaṇa period onwards have also been reviewed. The trend of Indianisation in solar images started in the Gupta period. The typical Sun-images of the early mediaeval period have also been described and textual descriptions have been utilised to compare and contrast these traits with the actual specimens. Lastly, the antiquity of the Sun-temple along with the description of a few important Sun-temples have been examined. The chapter seventh presents a historical survey of the origin and development of Sun-worship in relation to time, tradition and space. In the last Appendix 'A' has been added to provide with the epigraphic data on the Sun-cult in order to confirm and corroborate the data already gleaned from literary sources.

The description of the division of the dissertation reveals that emphasis has been given on source-wise treatment of the subject. This reliance upon the source-wise treatment is mainly because of the fact that the dates of most of the literary works of ancient India are still unsettled and there are wide divergences of views in this respect so much so that difference may be to the extent of four-five centuries in many cases. Further, it is apprehended that there may be overlapping of periods among different classes of literature. Moreover, most of the works of ancient India have not been written in one instance but at different times by different hands. There are much interpolations and later additions in many works. The result is that the period of most of the works extends in hundreds of years. For example, the earliest portion of the *Sāmba Upa-Purāṇa* has been dated in circa 500 A.D. while the latest in 1500 A.D. Similarly the earliest portion of the *Mahābhārata* has been dated in 400 B.C. and the latest in (400 A.D. at the earliest. Moreover, the different sources belong to different traditions having their own peculiarities.

In view of such difficulties purely historical treatment based upon rigid and arbitrary periodisation is beset with unending controversy as the source materials which may be considered for one period by a student may be taken by others as belonging to other period. This misplacement of sources may result into wrong conclusions and distortion of source material in perspective of time and tradition. Moreover, it is believed that the date of any religious institution or belief cannot be fixed on the basis of the author or work which first mentions it because a belief or institution might exist much earlier than it finds expression in literature. Farnell's[2] statement about Greek cults is equally applicable to Indian cults—"nor can we safely date a religious fact by the date of the author who first mentions it". Further, it is surmised that the source-wise treatment may be more exhaustive as the individual sources are studied exclusively at one place and conclusions may be correlated with other types of sources and traditions. Moreover, the source-wise treatment cannot be regarded as unhistorical if we take history to mean not mere dates and years of events but the onward march of the basic values of life in broad sequence and as the sources have been taken into descending sequence the history of the basic values of solar cult can be known by this method in a comfortable way. I am fully conscious of the fact that there is a great possibility of the repetition of ideas in different sources which I have tried to avoid as far as feasible. Since repetition of ideas in different sources only confirm the popularity and continuity of the ideas, there is always necessity of hinting them whenever and wherever they occur.

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[2] *E. R. E.*, Vol. vi, p. 314.

It must be admitted that the solar cult of India has not received its due attention as is given to other cults. No independent study of the solar cult has been done so far, though a few articles appeared on some aspects of Sun-worship in journals as discussed in the first chapter. The materials for the study of this cult still lie hidden in the original sources and are scattered in journals. Here, therefore, I have been tempted to trod on an almost untrodden field-a field which is full of possibilities and thought-provoking investigations.

The present study of Sun-worship in ancient India has been done particularly with special reference to northern India from the beginning of history to the end of the ancient period i.e. 12-13th centuries A.D., though the south Indian tradition of solar cult is also referred to in order to bring into greater relief the north Indian tradition of Sun-worship.

In the completion of the present work I have been helped by many in more ways than one and my acknowledgements are due to all. I am extremely grateful to Prof. A. L. Basham who has very kindly written the Foreword in spite of his busiest term at this time. He has been very kind to me in going through the manuscript and suggesting to me many ideas regarding the arrangement of material before it was sent to the press in 1969. The present work has been completed under the able guidance and supervision of Prof. G. R. Sharma. I am deeply beholden to him for the Introduction and all the guidance and help that he gave to me. I am also thankful to Prof. G. C. Pande, Prof. R. S. Sharma and Prof. Lallanji Gopal who gave valuable suggestions and guidance to me. I am grateful to my teachers in the department–Prof. J. S. Negi, Dr. U. N. Roy and Dr. B. N. S. Yadava; and my colleagues–Dr. S. N. Roy, Dr. R. K. Varma, Sri V. D. Misra, Sri R. K. Dwivedi, Sri S. C. Bhattacharya and others for various types of help, encouragement and guidance without which the work would not have seen the light of the day. Dr. Om Prakash and a few others have helped me in preparing the Index to whom I am grateful. I express my sense of gratitude to my wife Smt. Madhuri Srivastava who helped me in various ways. I am thankful to Sri. G. R. Maini for typing the manuscript neatly, Messers Saraswati Block Works Alld. for making the blocks, the Indian Press Pvt. Ltd. Alld. for printing, Sri Ratnesh for proof-reading and the Indological Publications for publishing the work. I am thankful to the University of Allahabad for permitting me to publish this work which has developed out of my thesis submitted and accepted for D. Phil. degree of the University in 1968.

I am thankful to Archaeological Survey of India, Archaeological Museum, Mathura; State Museum, Lucknow, and many others whose names are written below the plates for permitting me to reproduce their exhibits. Acknowledgements are due to all of them.

I am regretfully aware of the fact that in spite of best care a few mistakes of proof-reading, particularly of diacritical marks, have crept into the work. I crave the indulgence of scholars for these lapses.

20.4.72.
Allahabad

V. C. Srivastava

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.A.	*Atharvaveda and Āyurveda,* Karambelkar.
A.B.	*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.*
A.G.S.	*Āśvalāyana Grihyasūtra.*
A.V.	*Atharvaveda.*
Ap.M.B.	*Āpastamba Mantra Brāhmaṇa.*
Ap.D.S.	*Āpastamba Dharmasūtra.*
A.I.U.	*Age of Imperial Unity.*
A.S.L.	*Aspects of Sanskrit Literature,* S. K. De.
Arctic Home.	*Arctic Home in the Vedas,* B. G. Tilak.
A.S.S.	*Āśvalāyana Śrautasūtra.*
Ap.G.S.	*Āpastamba Grihyasūtra.*
Ap.S.S.	*Āpastamba Śrautasūtra.*
A.G.S.	*Āśvalayana Grihyasūtra.*
A.K.K.	*Archaeology of Kathiawar and Kach.* J. Burgess.
A.G.K.	*Archaeology of Gujarat and Kathiawar,* Sankalia.
A.S.B.	*Asiatic Society of Bengal,* Calcutta.
A.I.H.T.	*Ancient Indian Historical Tradition,* Pargiter.
A.I.	*Ancient India,* Delhi.
A.L.B.	*The Adyar Library Bulletin,* Madras.
A.B.O.R.I.	*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute,* Poona.
A.S.I.M.	*Archaeological Survey of India, Memoirs.*
A.I.O.C.	*All India Oriental Conference.*
A.A.	*Aitareya Āraṇyaka.*
A.R.A.S.I.	*Annual Report, Archaeological Survey of India.*
Bull.P.W.M.I.	*Bulletin of the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India,* Bombay.
B.D.S.	*Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra.*

Berlin Cat. of 1853	A. Weber, *Die Handschriften–Verzeichinesse der Königlichen Bibliothek. vol. I (Verzeichnis der Sanskrit Handschriften)*, *Berlin*, 1853.
B.S.S.	*Baudhyāyana Śrauta Sūtra.*
B.A.U.	*Brihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad.*
B.M.C.	*Catalogue of Indian Coins in the British Museum, Coins of Ancient India,* Allan.
Br.D. (*Brd.*)	*Brihaddevatā.*
B.D.C.R.I.	*Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute,* Poona.
Bhar. Vid.	*Bhāratīya Vidyā.*
B.S.O.S.	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies,* London.
Bull. Baroda Museum	*Bulletin of the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery,* Baroda.
C.H.I.	*Cambridge History of India.*
Cal.	Calcutta.
Ch.	Chapter.
Cul.H.I.	*Cultural Heritage of India,* Ram Krishna Mission Institute, Calcutta.
Cr.	Critical Ed., Poona.
C.I.I.	*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.*
C.A.I.	*Coins of Ancient India,* A., Cunningham.
C.S.S.	*Chowkhambha Sanskrit Series,* Varanasi.
C.I.M.	*Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta including the cabinet of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,* vol. I., V. A. Smith.
C.U.	*Chāndogya Upaniṣad.*
D.H.I.	*Development of Hindu Iconography,* J.N., Banerjea.
Ed. (H)	Edited, Edition (Hindi).
E.M.	*Epic Mythology,* Hopkins.
E.R.E.	*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.*
E.H.I.	*Elements of Hindu Iconography,* T.A.G. Rao.
E.I.	*Epigraphia Indica.*

f.n.	footnote.
F.A.R.	*Foundations of Atharvavānic Religion*, Shende.
Fig. (s)	Figure (s) .
G.	Gita Press, Gorakhpur Edition.
G.D.S.	*Gautama Dharmasūtra.*
G.E.I.	*Great Epic of India*, Hopkins.
G.G.S. (*G.G.*)	*Gobhila Grihyasūtra.*
H.D.S.	*History of Dharmaśāstra*, Kane.
H.I.L	*History of Indian Literature.*
H.G.S.	*Hiraṇyakeśin Grihyasūtra.*
H.S.L.	*History of Sanskrit Literature.*
H.O.S.	Harvard Oriental Series.
H.V.	*Harivaṁśa.*
H.I.I.A.	*History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, Coomaraswamy.
Index.	*Index to the names and subjects in the Mahābhārata*, Sorenson.
I.S.	*Indische Studien.*
I.A.	*Indian Antiquary.*
I.B.B.S. Dacca Museum	*Iconography of the Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, N. K. Bhattasali.
I.H.Q.	*Indian Historical Quarterly.*
J.N.S.I.	*Journal of the Numismatic Society of India.*
J.U.P.H.S.	*Journal of U.P. Historical Society.*
J.B.B.R.A.S.	*Journal of Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society of India.*
J.A.S.S.	*Journal of Asiatic Society*, Bengal.
J.A.S.B.	*Journal of the Oriental Institute*, Baroda.
J.A.S.	*Journal of the Asiatic Society*, Calcutta.
J.B.O.R.S.	*Journal of Bihar Orissa Research Society.*
J.A.H.R.S.	*Journal of Andhra Historical Research Society.*
J.A.O.S.	*Journal of American Oriental Society.*

J.A.	*Journal Asiatique,* Paris.
J.I.H.	*Journal of Indian History,* Trivandrum.
J.O.R.	*The Journal of the Oriental Research,* Madras.
J.G.R.S.	*Journal of the Gujarat Research Society,* Bombay.
J.A.S.L.	*Journal of the Asiatic Society, Letters,* Calcutta.
J.I.S.O.A.	*Journal of Indian Society of Oriental Art.*
J.R.A.S.	*Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland,* London.
J.O.I.B.	*The Journal of the Oriental Institute, M. S. University,* Baroda.
Kum.	*Kumārasaṁbhavaṁ.*
K.G.S. (Kh.G.S.)	*Khādira Grihya Sūtra.*
Kath., (K.S.)	*Kāṭhak Saṁhitā.*
Kat.Sr.S.	*Kātyāyaṇa Śrauta Sūtra.*
K.U.	*Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad.*
Kane. Vol.	*A Volume of Studies in honour of Prof. Kane.*
Mah.U.	*Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad.*
M.G.S.	*Mānava Grihya Sūtra.*
Megha.	*Meghadūtaṁ.*
M.A.S.I.	*Memoirs of Archaeological Survey of India.*
M.U.	*Maitrī Upaniṣad.*
MBH (M.B.H.)	*Mahābhārata.*
M.S.	*Maitrāyaṇi Saṁhitā.*
N.	*Nirukta,* Yāska.
N.I.A.	*New Indian Antiquary.*
O.R.V.	Oldenberg, *Die Religion der Veda.*
O.R.L.I.	*Outline of Religious Literature of India,* Farquhar.
O.H.R.J.	*The Orissa Historical Research Journal.*
O.S.T.	*Original Sanskrit Texts,* J. Muir.
Or. Art.	*Oriental Art,* London.

Purāṇic Records.	*Studies in the Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs,* Hazra.
P.W.	*Petersburger Worturbuch.*
P.B.	*Pancaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa.*
P.	*Purāṇa.*
P.I.H.C.	*Proceedings of Indian History Congress.*
Progess.	*Progress of Indic Studies,* R. N. Dandekar.
P.G.S.	*Pāraskara Grihyasūtra.*
Q.J.M.S.	*Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society,* Banglore.
Rvidh. (*R. Vidh*)	*Rigvidhāna Brāhmaṇa.*
Ram.	*Rāmāyaṇa.*
Ritu.	*Ritusaṁhāra.*
R.V.	*Rigveda.*
R.I.	*Religion of India,* Hopkins.
R.P.V.U.	*The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads* Keith.
R.R.	*Religion of the Rigveda,* Griswold.
S.B.	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.*
Studies.	*Studies in the Upa-purāṇas,* vol. I, Hazra.
S.G.S.	*Sāṁkhāyana Grihyasūtra.*
S.S.S.	*Sāṁkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra.*
Sak.	*Abhijñāna Śākuntalaṁ.*
S.M.B. (*Sm.B.*)	*Sāmavidhāna Brāhmaṇa.*
S.B.E.	*The Sacred Books of the East Series,* Oxford.
S.	*Smriti.*
S.S.	*Sūryaśatakaṁ* of Mayūra.
S.V.	*Sāmaveda.*
Svet.U.	*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad.*
S.E.P.	*Studies in the Epics and Purāṇas,* A.D. Pusalker.
T.S.	*Taittirīya Saṁhitā.*

T.B.	*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa.*
T.A.	*Taittirīya Āraṇyaka.*
V.M.	*Vedic Mythology,* Macdonell.
U. (*Up.*)	*Upaniṣad.*
Vik.	*Vikramorvaśīyaṁ.*
Viṣṇudh P.	*Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa.*
V.S.	*Vedische Studien* Geldner.
V.S.	*Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā.*
Vaik.Sr.S.	*Vaikhānasa Śrauta Sūtra.*
Vol. (*s*)	Volume (s) .
V.S.M.R.S.	*Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, and Minor Religious Systems,* R. G. Bhandarkar.
Val.	*Vālakhilya.*
V.D.S.	*Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra.*
W.Z.K.M.	*Wiener, Zietschrift fur die Kunde des Morgenlandes (Vienna Oriental Journal).*
Yaj. S.	*Yājñavalkya Smriti.*
Yt.	*Yasta.*
Z.D.M.G.	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft.*

TRANSLITERATION

अ	a	आ	ā	इ	i	ई	ī		
उ	u	ऊ	ū	ए	e	ए	ai		
ओ	o	औ	au	ऋ	ri	ॠ	rī	ऌ	li
क्	k	ख्	kh	ग्	g	घ्	gh	ङ	ṅ
च्	c	छ्	ch	ज्	j	झ्	jh	ञ्	ñ
ट्	ṭ	ठ्	ṭh	ड्	ḍ	ढ्	ḍh	ण्	ṇ
त्	t	थ्	th	द्	d	ध्	dh	न्	n
प्	p	फ्	ph	ब्	b	भ्	bh	म्	m
य्	y	र्	r	ल्	l	व्	v	श्	ś
ष्	ṣ	स्	s	ह्	h				
	Anusvāra			ं	ṁ				
	Viserga			:	ḥ				

Note—Modern and popular names are usually written without diacritical marks.

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CHAPTER I

THE BACK-DROP

Religion has been one of the important forces in the lives of ancient Indians. Every sphere of Indian life was influenced by the religious beliefs and practices in the past. To understand India is to know the history of various creeds and rituals that prevailed here in ancient times. As early as the last quarter of the 18th century the study of India's past[1] began but unfortunately it was inspired more with the view to find out the weak points in Hinduism and capitalise them for conversion to Christianity[2] than with the idea of a sympathetic understanding of Indian culture in its proper perspective. In spite of their imperialist ideology and ulterior motives the Europeans may be credited with the initiation of a process of Indological studies which had been pregnant with immense possibilities.

It was in 1828 that a specific contribution was made towards the study of Indian cults by H. H. Wilson's article, A Sketch of the Religious Sects of the Hindus (published originally in two parts in *Asiatic Researches,* Volume XVI, 1828 and Volume XVII, 1832; and later on in the book-form in Volume I of H. H. Wilson's works, Trubner & Co. London, 1862), which was concerned more with the present divisions of the Hindus and of the Vaiṣṇavas in particular than with the origin and growth of Indian sects. However, it recognized, at this early stage of Indian studies, the existence of a sect of Sun-worshippers known as *"Sauras"* who opposed Śaṅkarācārya and were divided into six sub-sects; and "were present, though few, in British India."[3] The 19th century Indological studies had been dominated by the emphasis on Comparative Mythology and original Sanskrit literature.[4] The study of Sun-worship along with other cults gained from these approaches as, on one hand, they provided the links between the Indian and the Indo-Āryan and the Indo-Irānian gods and, on the other, they supplied safer foundations in original Sanskrit texts, mostly Vedic, for the study of these cults. For example, J. Muir[5] discussed the nature and personality of many solar gods—Sūrya, Savitri, Pūṣan, Viṣṇu etc. on the basis of the Vedic literature and compared them with their Indo-European and Indo-Irānian counterparts.

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[1] The best evidence of this interest may be seen in the establishment of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784. cf. Sastri, K. A. N., *Sources of Indian History,* p. 3.

[2] Max Müller, F., *S.B.E.,* I., pt. I, Preface p. XL. Wilson, H. H., *Essays and Lectures chiefly on the Religion of the Hindus,* vol. II, p. 41.

Even after a century of their beginnings Indic researches could not produce a single treatise dealing exclusively with the origins and developments of cults. Max Müller's *Origin and Growth of Religion* (1878) studied the problem of the origin of religion in general. Sun-worship as found in the Vedic literature was casually referred by him to illustrate his thesis.

It was in the last quarter of the 19th century that attention was drawn to the study of the history of Indian religions. Barth's *The Religions of India* (*Encyclopaedia des Sciences Religieuses,* Paris, 1879 and later on in 1881 translated into English by J. Wood and published from London). Monier William's *Brahmanism and Hinduism*

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3. Wilson, *Religious Sects of the Hindus,* (Ed.) E.R. Rost (Cal. 1958 ed.) p. 148.

4. These trends are illustrated by such works as Max Müller's *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* (1859) and J. Muir's *Original Sanskrit Texts* (London, 5 vol., 1860--72); and Cox's *The Mythology of the Āryan Nations* (London 1870); Max Müller's *Chips from a German Workshop* (2 vols., London, 1868); Wilkin's *Hindu Mythology—Vedic and Purāṇic* (Cal., 1882) and Coleman's *The Mythology of the Hindus* (London, 1832).

5. *Original Sanskrit Texts,* vol. V., secs. X–XII,

(London, 1883), and E. W. Hopkins' *The Religions of India* (Boston, 1894) illustrate the trend. Besides their importance as being general histories of Indian religions they enriched the study of Sun-worship in many respects. They recognised the existence of a group of the Sun-gods in the Vedic literature. The emergence of the Sun-sect in the post-Vedic period which compared favourably with Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism[6] received the attention of these scholars. The role of Sun-worshiping Magi priests in the development of this cult was also briefly discussed by them. Anthropological researches were gaining popularity at this time. Hopkins added a chapter on the religious beliefs of the native tribes of India. He showed that many tribes worshipped the Sun-god as the supreme spirit by feasts and rituals.[7] Thus these general histories of Indian religions indicated the lines of development of Sun-worship—its Āryan tradition as found in the Vedic literature, its post-Vedic cult form as enshrined in the Epics and the Purāṇas and also its pre-Vedic traditions as reflected in the practices of the native tribes.

The last quarter of the 19th century also witnessed the emergence of the Vedic study as the source and foundation of Indian socio-religious life. It became almost a craze with the Indologists to study the Vedic literature particularly the *Rigveda* and emphasise its importance as the sole basis of Indian culture. Oldenberg's *Die Religion des Veda* (German, Berlin, 1894), Pischel's and Geldner's *Vedische Studien* (Stuttgart, 1889 and 1892) and Macdonell's *Vedic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1897) are illustrative of this trend. These works successfully brought forth, inter-alia, the nature and personality traits of the Sun-gods by a critical examination of solar myths and legends preserved in the Vedic literature and also by the philological analysis of the hymns of the *Rigveda*. They also showed the antecedents of the Sun-gods and traced their origins mostly in the Indo-European or Indo-Irānian period. In this context Macdonell's attempt[8] is praiseworthy because he built the very framework of Sun-worship in the Vedic period by bringing out the solar basis of many Rigvedic gods, by narrating the role of these solar gods in the sacrificial system of the Vedic period and by throwing light upon the forms of Sun-worship such as symbolic, theriomorphic and anthropomorphic. In brief, it may be said that he analysed the 'Why and How' of Sun-worship in the Vedic literature. But the principle of growth in religion did not attract the attention of these scholars. Another lacuna in these works lies in the fact that they gave scant attention to the *Atharvaveda* and the later Vedic literature in comparison to the *Rigveda*. However, this defect was somewhat compensated by Bloomfield in 1899 when he published the *Atharvaveda* (Strassburg) with a valuable introduction where he discussed its place in the history of Indian religions.[9] It broke the monopoly of the *Rigveda* as the exclusive source of Indian religions and demonstrated that a true picture of the Vedic religion may be drawn only after a careful study of both these Vedas of different traditions.[10] The *Atharvaveda* contains many new features of Sun-worship such as the emergence of Rohita as a Sun-god and increased importance of the magic and medicine in it. In spite of this translation a systematic study of these features remained a desideratum. Since the Atharvavedic traditions had definite connections with the popular masses its study might have have divulged, inter-alia, the popular aspect of Sun-worship. However, on a completely different basis, a study of popular aspect of Indian religions was done by Crooke in his work *The Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India* (2 Vols, Allahabad, 1896). It gave a new direction to the study of Indian religions and a few popular legends connected with Sun-worship also found a place in it. Thus the main trend in the study of Indian religions in general and of Sun-worship in particular in the 19th century had been to emphasise the Āryan traditions on the basis of Comparative Mythology and Philology though occasional peep into the dark corners of popular aspects of Sun-cult was also done. But the study of Sun-worship at this time was handicapped by the complete neglect of the Epic and Purāṇic data, the absence of archaeological and iconographic evidences and the apathy for the indigenous ideas and popular practices. Further, the occidental training and imperialist view-point prevented most of them from understanding the crux of Indian religions. To them oriental myths and phraseology expressive of highest truths appeared as 'theological twaddle'[11] devoid of human interest. The study of Indian Sun-worship though definitely gained from comparative mythological studies, general histories of religions and publication of original Sanskrit texts, yet it remained in the infant stage.

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[6] Barth, A., *The Religions of India,* (4th edition), pp. 256-57 remarked that the most powerful of all these religions of Hindus "the only one which has really been able to rival those of Viṣṇu and Śiva, the only one with-all concerning which we have numerous and positive testimonies is that of Sun."

[7] *The Religions of India* (1895 Ed.), pp. 524—42.

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[8] Macdonell, A. A., *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 29–45, 150, 155.

[9] Bloomfield, M., *Atharvaveda*, Grundriss, II, p. 7.

[10] Griffith, R. T. H., *Atharvaveda*, vol. I, Intro., p. VIII-IX; Winternitz, M., *A History of Indian Literature*, p. 129.

The 20th century opened with new hopes for, and developments in, the study of Indology. A reaction has already started against the Imperialist Ideology which had hitherto dominated the scene. There had been keen awareness among Indian, Western and American scholars to study India's past from her own point of view and that too sympathetically.[12] The rise of the 'Nationalist Ideology' had its repercussions upon the study of Indian religions as well. The tradition of studying the Vedic literature, began as early as the 19th century, was continued by Bloomfield in his monograph *The Religion of the Veda* (New York, 1908). Like his predecessors he also recognised a group of solar gods in the Vedic literature. There had been publications of a few general works on Indian religions.

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[11] See Max Müller, *Chips from a German Worshop*, vol. I.

[12] The efforts of R. G. Bhandarkar, B. G. Tilak, R. L. Mitra, B. N. Seal and many others may be taken to indicate the dominance of the 'Nationalist Ideology'.

But the study of Sun-worship could not be richer in spite of these general works.

The first quarter of the 20th century witnessed opening of new lines of research in the field of Indian religions and a few specific contributions were made in this period. First significant development in the field of Sun-worship was in the form of its study as a whole on the combined basis of the Vedic, Epic and Purāṇic evidences confirmed by the secular literature and the then available epigraphic data. This trend is best illustrated by R. G. Bhandarkar's *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems*[13] (Strassburg, 1913). It emphasises that aspect of Indian religion which is popularly known as Hinduism as distinct from Vedism which had been the magnificent obsession with the Indologists so long. It also shows the sympathetic nationalist mind behind the work. For the first time a systematic survey, though brief, of Sun-worship was done on the combined basis of various types of sources then available. It resulted into the emergence of a coherent and organic picture of the origin and growth of Sun-cult. He emphasised the role of the Iranian Magi priests in the evolution of north Indian Sun-worship. However, one serious omission in this study was the complete absence of the discussion on solar iconography. It is needless to say that the study of religion cannot proceed to any extent without a study of iconography, particularly in India where the image-worship is the very pivot of the popular religion.'[14]

The study of solar iconography which caught attention of scholars soon after Bhandarkar's work opened a new vista of research. J. A. Gopinatha Rao for the first time enumerated[15] various forms of the images of the Ādityas and the Navagrahas in his work *Elements of Hindu Iconography*

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[13] Howe, G. F. and others, *The American Historical Association's Guide to Historical Literature*, (New York, 1961), p. 53, No. D-69 brands it as an 'outstanding work'.

[14] Bhattacharya, B. C., *Indian Images*, p. v.

[15] Vol. I, pt. II, pp. 299–323.

(2 vols., Madras 1914—1916). He compared the south and north Indian Sun-images and concluded that there is no foreign influence in south Indian tradition of Sun-images while the north Indian Sun-images are influenced by the Irānian traits. But he was so much obsessed with the factual differences between the north and the south Indian varieties of Sun-images that he failed to elaborate the factors responsible for differences in these two traditions. In spite of this short-coming, the provision of textual descriptions of Sun-images in original in this work was responsible for the awakening of interest in solar iconography as the very backbone of Sun-cult. A comparative study of these different texts might have led to the knowledge of different sources, traditions and forms of Sun-cult. But being the pioneer work on iconography it had neither scope nor occasion to indulge into such controversial and exclusive questions. A similar attempt, though on a smaller scale, was made by H. Krishna Sastri in his work *South Indian images of Gods and Goddesses* (*Madras*, 1916). The new line of research pioneered by Rao was ably taken up by J. N. Banerjea who published an article on 'Sūrya in Brāhmaṇical Arts' (*Indian Antiquary*, vol. 54, 1925). In this article he gave exclusive attention to the evolution of solar iconography and as such narrated the stages in its growth. He tried to show the origins of early Sun-images and came to the conclusion that they derived inspiration from the Vedic descriptions but he recognised the influence of Irānian tradition also on later Sun-images of northern India.

Theism had been the basis of Hinduism as found in the Epics and the Purāṇas in contrast to the naturalistic view of religion as propounded in the Vedic literature.[16] It is in the fitness of things that with the recognition of the importance of Hinduism in the history of Indian religion, the aspect of *bhakti* should also attract due attention. A few monographs appeared on the aspect in the first quarter of the 20th century. Notable among them are Macnicol's

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[16] See, Dale, Riep, *Naturalistic Tradition in Indian Thought.*

Indian Theism (Oxford University Press, 1915), and J. E. Carpentier's *Theism in Mediaeval India* (London, 1921). Macnicol recognised the 'theogonic capacity'[17] of the Sun-gods and Vegetation-gods and their role in the evolution of *bhakti* and sectarian forms of worship.

The importance of the Epic mythology in the history of Indian religions cannot be over-emphasised. It inspired Hopkins to publish his *'Epic Mythology,'* (Strassburg, 1915). He showed that besides the Vedic literature the Epics also contain some important sources of Sun-cult. The development of a Sun-sect is a characteristic feature of the Epics. Its popular and indigenous origins may also be seen in this literature. In this very quarter W. T. Olcott published *Sun-lore of All Ages* (New York, 1914) where he collected the legends, traditions and superstitions that all ages and nations have woven round the Sun. It showed the universality of Sun-worship and certain common links between the Indian Sun-worship and those of other countries. But his study loses much of its importance on account of the omission of documentation and footnotes. The publication of J. N. Farquhar's *An Outline of the Religious Literature of India* (Oxford, 1920) marks a definite milestone in the onward march of Indian religious studies. He gave a good account of the *Saura* literature and thus supplied us a convenient background for the study of Sun-cult. In spite of the lapse of about half a century since it was published, the work is still considered as 'an extensive bibliography on an important aspect of Hinduism' and as containing 'most of the basic documents for a study of Hinduism.'[18]

The next decade (1925—35 A.D.) witnessed an all-round development in the study of the different branches of Indology and many general works on art, religion, iconography etc. appeared. These general works, though contain references to Sun-worship, made no specific contributions. For example, in his *Worship of Nature* Frazer included a chapter on Sun-worship of the Vedic Indians. A. B. Keith's *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣads* (H.O.S., 1925) also described the Sun-gods in the Vedic literature and their role in the Vedic rituals but the contribution, though encyclopaedic, is general, not specific. Similar is the case with S. K. Hodivala's *Indo-Irānian Religion* (Bombay 1925) where he studied among other topics the Indo-Irānian counterparts of Indian Sun-gods. Such general works on art as that of Smith, Havell, Coomarswamy, R. D. Banerji and B. C. Bhattacharya contained descriptions of Sun-temples and Sun-images. This decade is particularly notable[19] for the increased importance of iconography. A number of catalogues of museums[20] containing descriptions of Sun-images, inter-alia, appeared. They provided first hand materials for a scientific and systematic study of one of the important branches of Sun-cult i.e. iconography. Besides, a few articles critically analysing the features and tendencies of Sun-images also appeared during the period. M. S. Vats described a lintel with fine representation of Sūrya on one wheeled chariot of mediaeval period in his Sculptures from Ahar and Bulandsahar (*A.R.A.S.I.*, 1925-26, pp. 172—74). Similarly K. C. Sarkar's article 'A New Form of Sūrya from Varendra' (*I.H.Q.*, vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 465—70 and also in *A.I.O.C.*, vol. 2, p. 242) described a rare image of the Sun-god with 3 or 4 heads and 10 arms resembling the type described as *Mārtaṇḍa-Bhairava* in the *Śārdātilaka*. Many other articles describing Sun-images appeared. Notable among them are N.

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[17] *Indian Theism, pp.* 31-32.

[18] Howe, G. F., op. cit., p. 51 (D-50).

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[19] Dandekar, R. N. (Ed.) *Progress of Indic Studies* (1917—42) (Poona, 1942), pp. 43-44.

[20] A few notable ones are J. Ph. Vogel's *La Sculpture de Mathura* (Paris & Brussels, 1930), N. K. Bhattasali's *Iconography of Buddhist and Brāhmaṇical Sculptures in the Decca Museum* (Decca 1929), V. S. Agarwal's *Handbook to the Sculptures in the Curzon Museum of Archaeology, Muttra* (Allahabad, 1933), Spooner's & Hargreave's *Handbook to the Sculptures in the Peshawar Museum* (I Ed. 1909, II Ed. 1930, Calcutta).

Chakravarti's and S. K. Saraswati's 'Note on a Seated and inscribed image of Sūrya from Qasbah (Ekadala) Distt. Dinājpur (*J.A.S.B.*, XXVIII, pp. 147–50), K. Datta's 'Two *Saura* images from the district of 24 Paraganas' (*I.H.Q.*, vol. IX, pp. 202–7), Prabhu Dayal Ji's *Hamsī Ke Kile Kī Sūrya Pratimā* (in Hindi *Gaṅgā*, Jan., 1933, pp. 312-13). N. K. Basu described the temple of Koṇārak in *Pravāsi* (Kārtik 1340 V.S. in Bengali). This trend enriched the study of Sun-worship indeed since it brought forth regional and typological variations of Sun-images. Such type of approach was particularly fruitful for the study of details of rituals. But it was not helpful in knowing basic concepts of Sun-worship which can be known primarily from a study of the literary sources. There appears to have been no attempt to correlate the data of iconography and architecture with the literary evidences. The subject was studied exclusively either on the basis of some known literary texts or iconography. A few notable articles of the decade discussing Sun-worship purely on the basis of literature are: Tarak Chandra Dasa's 'The Sun-worship in Ancient India' (*A.I.O.C.*, vol. II), R. N. Saha's 'The Sun cult', Yamunacharya's 'The Cult of Sun-worship in India' (both in the 5th volume of *A.I.O.C.*) and C. Venkatacharya's 'The Sun and its Conceptions in the Vedas' (*A.I.O.C.* Vol. VIII). The subject was receiving the attention of scholars as papers were read regularly at the Oriental conferences.

The next decade (1935–45 A.D.) continued the emphasis on the iconographic aspect of Sun-cult as will be evident from two famous works of this decade—G. P. Pandey's thesis (unpublished, Leyden 1939) *Iconographical Study of Indian Sun-god* and J. N. Banerjea's *Development of Hindu Iconography* (Calcutta, 1941). Pandey collected the materials on Sun-images and critically examined their main features also. Banerjea's work included ample materials on the origin and development of solar iconography. It was a definite improvement on its preceding works. One of its novel features was the study of symbols on seals and coins of which many were solar such as the wheel, the lotus, and the taurine. In it he critically examined the influences of Hellenic and Irānian traditions on north Indian Sun-images.

Besides iconography, this decade also witnessed the publication of a few works emphasising the Vedic background of Sun-cult. Atkin's *Pūṣan in the Rigveda* (Princeton, 1941) revealed the solar nature of Pūṣan. Similarly V. M. Apte in his work *Social and Religious life in the Grihyasūtras* (Ahmedabad, 1939) discussed the role of the Sun-gods in the domestic rites of the Hindus.

By this time the monopoly of the Vedic study was on its wane and emphasis came to be placed on the *Smriti-Purāṇa* materials as sources of Hindu religions. From the view-point of Sun-worship P. V. Kane's *History of Dharmaśāstra* (Vol. II, Poona, 1941) brought forth the Smriti materials on Sun-cult and also described in brief the role of the Sun-gods in various domestic rites such as *Upanayana, Devayajña, Namaskāra, Saṁdhyopāsanā* etc. R. C. Hazra's article 'Three most important places of Sun-worship in Ancient India' (*Bhārtīya Vidyā*, vol. IV, 1942, pp. 212—216) took Purāṇic evidences as the basis for the reconstruction of the geographical map of Sun-worship with particular emphasis upon its three centres.

A new direction to the study was given by N. Chaudhary in his article in *Man in India* (Vol. XXI, 1941) where he emphasised the folk aspect of Sun-cult which existed from the early Vedic to the present times—a point of view which was much earlier hinted at by Crookes.

The next decade (1945—55 A.D.) continued the study of Sun-images and temples. In this respect the contributions of J. N. Banerjea are worth mentioning. He studied various problems connected with the origin and growth of Sun-images and explained their salient features also on the basis of literary texts. His article Sūrya, Ādityas and the Navagrahas (*J.I.S.O.A.*, vol. XVI, 1948, pp. 47—101) provides us with a chronological study of solar iconography from earliest times to the mediaeval period. He traces its origin in various symbols such as the rayed disc, the lotus, the gold-plate etc. found in the Vedic and Purāṇic literaratures of India. A brief discussion regarding the probable source of the four-horsed Sūrya image of Bodh Gaya in the Vedic tradition has also been done. He controverted the stand-point of Cunningham who saw the Greek influence in such images. From the 1st century A.D. onwards Sun-images came to be made in the fashion of northerners'. The Hellenised Irānian tradition of Sun-worship was shown to be at the back of this strain. From the Gupta period onwards Indianisation of Sun-images became quite marked. In the article a brief description of the twelve Ādityas and the Navagrahas was also given. It critically examined the antiquity and contributions of the Irānian Magi priests in the evolution of Indian Sun-cult and also provided an organic picture of the evolution of Sun-cult primarily on the basis of images though corroborated by literary evidences also. Banerjea in another article 'Myths Explaining Some Alien Traits of the North-Indian Sun Icons' (*I.H.Q.*, vol. XXVIII, 1952, pp. 1—6) discussed some prominent alien features of the solar iconography such as northerner's dress, boots, girdle round the waist etc. on the basis of the *Mahābhārata,* the *Brihat-saṁhitā* and the Purāṇas. In another article, A Bharhut Railing Sculpture (*P.I.H.C.,* Vol. X, 1947, pp. 65—68) he disproved Barua's identification of this image with Mihira and suggested its identification with some Indo-Greek king. The themes of *Chatra* and boots of Sun-images engaged the attention of other scholars. For instance, D. K. Biswas discussed this problem in his article—Two Solar Legends Re-examined (*O.H.R.J.,* vol. I, No. 1, 1952, pp. 24—30) on the basis of literary references. The same scholar also took up the problem of the combined worship of 'Sūrya and Śiva' (*I.H.Q.* 1948) where he emphasised the syncretic aspect of Sun-cult particularly in respect of Śiva-worship and substantiated his thesis by taking recourse to an Indo-Javanese text. R. G. Gyani examined the identification of the so-called Sūrya and Indra figures in cave N. 20 of the Bhājā group (*Bull. P.W.M.I.,* 1950-51, pp. 15—21) where he tried to prove that it represents Māndhātā, not Sūrya.

Temples formed an integral part of the cult-life of ancient Indians. The decade witnessed the publication of a number of articles on Sun-temples also. Notable among them are Koṇārak (*Mārg* II, No. 2, pp. 43—55), D. P. Roy Choudhury's Indian Sculptures (mainly on Koṇārak) (*Rooplekhā,* vol. XXII, No. 1, 1949-50, pp. 11—16), S. Bharucha's The Sun-temple at Modhera (*Mārg* V, No. 1, pp. 50—56), H. Goetz's The Sun-temple of Mārtaṇḍa and the Art of Lalitāditya Muktāpīḍa (*Art and Letters,* XXVII, pp. 1—11), Koṇārak temple in Orissa (*Modern Review* LXXXVIII, 1950, pp. 2—70), the Mārtaṇḍa temple in *Kashmir* (I, No. 20, 1951, p. 497), S. K. Saraswati's Temple of Orissa (*O.H.R.J.,* I., No. 20, 1953, pp. 233—53), and Three Accounts of the Koṇārak Temple (*O.H.R.J.,* I, No. 2, 1952). Most of these were popular accounts and were not very useful for the academic purposes except a few of them as that of Goetz where he tried to prove that the Mārtaṇḍa temple served as the model for later Kashmir-art. The last article in the list given above brings forth abstracts from *Āine-Akbarī,* Sterling and Fergusson. Their works, however, stimulated popular mind towards the study of Sun-cult as they focussed attention on important centres of public Sun-worship in ancient India. The Purāṇas as sources of Indian religions and culture had been engaging the attention of scholars and one typical example of this decade is supplied by D. R. Patil's '*Cultural History from the Vāyu Purāṇa*' (Poona, 1946). In this work a few pages were devoted to the sectarian Sun-worship as found in the *Vāyu Purāṇa* but absence of dating of different strata of this Purāṇa makes the study to lose much of its importance. A connected history of the origin and growth of Sun-cult was a great desideratum. However, this need was partially fulfilled by Bhārtīya Vidyā Bhavan's *The Age of Imperial Unity* (1953), *The Classical Age* (1954) and *The Age of Imperial Kanauj* (1955) where H. D. Bhattacharya gave a brief description of the history of Sun-worship on the basis of available materials.

The last decade (1955–66) witnessed an all-round development in the study of different branches of Indology. But the study of Sun-cult did not receive the needed attention and the approach remained the same i.e. to deal with some aspect of Sun-worship in a piece-meal way either on iconographic or literary basis purely. There had been no attempt to correlate various sources and evolve an organic picture of Sun-cult. A brief review of important works of the decade will bring this point home to us. L. Renou in his *Vedic India* (Calcutta, 1957) reiterated the old view that there is a group of solar gods in the Vedic literature. P. E. Dumont showed the solar nature of the Vedic deity-Aja-Ekapāda (*J.A.O.S.* vol. 53) and cited references from the *Mahābhārata* to substantiate his view-point. A. K. Coomarswamy studied the philosophical implications of The Sun-Kiss (*J.A.O.S.* vol. 60) referred to in the Brāhmaṇas and came to the conclusion that such references show the procreative potency of the Sun-god. No doubt, the fertility aspect of the Sun-god was recognised all-over the world and ancient India was no exception to it. It may be recalled that the Atharvavedic study has always been given a step-motherly treatment and therefore N. J. Shende's Foundations of Atharvavānic Religion (*B.D.C.R.I.*, Poona, Vol. IX), his *Religion and Philosophy of the Atharvaveda* (Nagpur, 1952) and F. W. Karmvelkar's *Atharvavedic Civilization* (Nagpur, 1959) may be regarded as welcome additions to the assessment of popular and indigenous role in the evolution of the Hindu religion. These works demonstrated the magical and medicinal aspect of Sun-worship so characteristicially found in the Atharvaveda. As the scope of these works was much wider than the study of Sun-worship they failed to do justice to the various aspects of the Atharvavedic Sun-worship such as the problem of Rohita, Atharva-Āṅgiras priests and their role in the evolution of Sun-cult etc. By this time an awareness has dawned among the Indologists regarding the prominent part of non-Āryan sources of Indian culture and religion. S. K. De's study of Sun-sect on the basis of the Epics in his *Aspects of Sanskrit literature* (Calcutta, 1959) exemplifies the importance of the Epic literature which came to be attached to it during this period. The inter-relation of cults and sects had also been one of the problems for the students of Indian religions. In this respect S. K. De's article Bhāgavatism and Sun-worship (*B.S.O.S.*, VI, pp. 1069—72) is significant. He opposed the view of Grierson and Roychoudhury that Bhāgavatism is a direct development of Sun-worship. R. C. Hazra contributed a number of articles on the Purāṇic sources of Sun-worship. The Sun-worshippers produced a sectarian literature of their own also. This point was well brought out by Hazra's works such as 'Sāmba-Purāṇa a *Saura* work of different hands' (*A.B.O.R.I.*). 'The Sāmba-Purāṇa through the Ages (*J.A.S.L.*, XVIII, 2, pp. 90—111) and *Studies in the Upa-Purāṇas,* vol. I (Calcutta, 1958). These works provide us with the basic materials for the study of Sun-cult as developed in ancient India between 500 and 1500 A.D. Hazra's mastery of textual criticism and chronological insight has placed the materials on Sun-cult in their proper perspective in relation to time, tradition and space. A study of these materials may definitely evolve an organic picture of Sun-sect in reliable chronological sequence. V. V. Mirashi discussed three famous temples of Multan, Koṇārak and Kālapriya on the basis of the Purāṇas in his article 'Three most famous temples of the Sun (*Purāṇa,* vol. VIII, No. 1, Jan. 1966). The early Purāṇic materials for Sun-worship, inter-alia, was studied by S. N. Rai in his thesis *The Religious and Social Data in the Purāṇas—Viṣṇu, Matsya, Vāyu and Brahmāṇḍa* (in Hindi, Allahabad University, 1959) which was later on published in book-form in Hindi (*Paurāṇic Dharma Evaṁ Samāja,* Panchanada Publications, Allahabad, 1968) where he has devoted a chapter on Sun-worship in the early Purāṇas. To that very effect he contributed an article 'Early Purāṇic Account of Sun and Solar Cult (*University of Allahabad Studies,* 1965). He traced the survivals of Vedic traditions of Sun-worship in the early Purāṇic literatures and also showed new features in the personality traits of the Sun-gods. V. S. Agrawal's *Solar Symbolism of Boar* (Chowkhambha S. S., Varanasi, 1966) discussed solar elements in the boar incarnation of Viṣṇu on the basis of the Vedic and Purāṇic literature. Many articles appeared on solar iconography and temples during the decade.[21] But generally they were concerned more with the art than the religion of Sun-cult.

Thus the study of Sun-worship had been gaining from various quarters and its various aspects came to be enriched by these efforts of scholars. The approach had been generally to isolate one or the other aspect of it such as iconography, temples or the personality traits of the Sun-gods and to study them separately again on the basis of isolated sources of either Vedic literature or Purāṇic literatures or iconographic details or temple descriptions. The approach in the past has been topical. There had been no attempt to study this cult in the proper historical perspective showing the developmental sequence on the combined basis of literature, religious and secular both; iconography; inscriptions; coins; temples and the traditions of Sun-worship in

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21. Notable are D. Mitra's Notes on Koṇārak (*J. A. S.* Fourth Series, III. 2. 1961), T. V. G. Sastri's Sun Temple in Western India, (*Or. Art.* N.S. VIII, No. 2, 1962); R. C. Agarwal's A Newly discovered Sūrya Nārāyaṇa sculpture from Rajasthan (*A.L.B.* XXVI, pts. 3-4, 1962); J. M. Nanavati's Three Post-Gupta Sun images from Saurashtra (*J.G.R.S.*, XXV, 1963); R. T. Parikh's Two Sculptures from Vadval near Deesa, *N.G.* (*J.O.I.B.*, X, No. 4, 1961); R. Sen Gupta's Sūrya, Viṣṇu and Mahālakṣmī from Haveri (*J.O.R.*, XXVIII, 1958-59); H. Goetz's Sūrya as the Supreme Godhead (a rare early Cahmāna Sculpture) (*P. K. Gode Comm. vol.* pt. II); A. K. Bhattacharya's Koṇārak and its Builder (*Or. Art.* N.S. VI, No. 1, 1960); Charles Fabri's, The Sculpture of the Sun-temple—a study in styles, (*Mārg*, XI, No. 1, 1958); S. K. Chakravarti's Sun Temple of Koṇārak, (*March of India*, X, No. 7, 1958); M. Mansinha's Reflection on the Wonders and Enigima of Koṇārak (*Mārg*, XII, No. 1, 1958); M. R. Anand's Homage to Koṇārak (*Mārg*, XII, No. 1, 1958), V. S. Naravane's Mārtaṇḍa, the Crowning Phase of Ancient Kashmir Architecture (*Kashmir*, V., No. 5, 1955); K. B. Dave's A Unique Metal image of Sun from Gujarat (*J.O.I.B.*, IV, No. 4); B. C. Chhabra's Sūrya Images from Roda N. Gujrat, (*Bull. Baroda Museum*, XII, 1955-56) and R. C. Agarwal's *Osian* (*Marwar*) *Kā Sūrya Mandir* (*Ver.* vol. IX, No. 3, July, 1966).

Irān and Greece which definitely played important role in the evolution of Indian Sun-worship. The subject may be studied from the point of view of evolutionary mythology or historical growth of the basic concepts or from the viewpoint of ritual details and regional and geographical distributions and differences in tradition. There are still many problems connected with Sun-cult which need thorough re-examination in the light of recent archaeological finds,[22] increased knowledge of inscriptions and authoritative[23] editions of literary texts. One typical example of such problems is provided by the question of antiquity, identity and role of Irānian Magi priests. Similarly the question of indigenous tradition of Sun-worship as known from prehistoric rock paintings, protohistoric pottery designs and practices of non-Āryan tribes also needs thorough investigation.

The historical study of Sun-worship should be done neither from the point of view of 'Spritualism' nor from the fashionable point of view of 'historical materialism' alone. The development of a religious system is a product of diverse forces. Every system has its own spiritual background, socio-economic bases, and political moorings.[24] It is from this basic conviction that the present author is tempted to study the successive stages in the development of the basis ideals and conceptions of Sun-cult right from its faint beginning in the proto-historic period to its maturity in the early mediaeval period (8th—13th century A.D.) on the combined bases of Brāhmaṇical sources, secular literature, inscriptions, iconography, coins, temples and practices of indigenous tribes. It is a history of Sun-worship primarily from the point of view of growth and development against the melee of political, socio-economic and spiritual needs and aspirations of the community.

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[22] For example the excavations at Bālambāt (A. H. Dani, *Ancient Pakistan,* vol. III) brought forth the traces of Mithraic religion in N.W. India as early as the Achaemenid period. This may push back the antiquity of Magas in India to the 5th cen. B.C., and compel us to change our long cherished views about the date and degree of Mithraic influence on Sun-cult in ancient India.

[23] The critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* and comparatively better editions of the Purāṇas may help us in throwing trustworthy light on many dark corners of Sun-cult.

[24] Breasted, J. H., *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt,* p. XVI has emphasised that no single factor works at any time to the exclusion of others for the development of thought.

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNING

Jane Ellen Harrison[1] has pointed out that the origins of Greek religion can not be traced in Homer because he presents 'not a starting-point, but a complete achievement, an almost mechanical accomplishment with scarcely a hint of origins'. What Harrison has said for Homer that can be applied to the *Rigveda* in the context of Indian religions.

The *Rigveda* which was believed to contain the germs of the religious beliefs of the great majority of the modern Indians[2] definitely presents a stage higher than that of the beginning.[3] The discovery of the prehistoric and the protohistoric cultures,[4] howsoever fragmentary and uncertain their evidences may be, is significant from the point of view of origins of Indian religions. The testimony of beliefs and practices of primitive tribes[5] may be taken into account to corroborate the tentative conclusions drawn on the basis of 'speechless' material evidences of the prehistoric and the protohistoric archaeology of India. In addition to these, references to beliefs and rituals of the non-Āryans in the later literature of India may also be helpful in this connection. The parallels in the prehistoric and the protohistoric cultures of other countries[6] with whom Indians had contacts in the past also throw light on this issue.

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[1] *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion,* Intr. p. VII.

[2] Macdonell, A. A., *The Vedic Mythology,* p. 2; Max Müller believed that the origin of religion may be known from a study of the Vedic literature. See his *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion,* Varanasi, 1964 (Ed.).

[3] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 2, himself accepts that the earliest stage of Vedic mythology is not so primitive as was at one time supposed.

[4] Allchin, B. & R., *The Birth of Indian Civilization,* p. 308, brings this point home to us when he says, 'Archaeology can still tell us little of the religion of non-literate stages of society and in a real sense the history of Indian religion only begins with the *Rigveda.* But religion has none the less a prehistory and archaeology can and does afford some evidence of its nature.'

[5] James, E.O., *Beginnings of Religion,* p. 22.

Johannes Maringer[7] while discussing the religions of the prehistoric man in Europe came to the conclusion that a widespread cult of the Sky and the Sun had been one of the characteristic features of the Neolithic farmers in Europe. Tylor[8] also came to a similar conclusion on ethnographic grounds. He writes that the Sun is not so evidently the god of wild hunters and fishers as the tillers of the soil who watch him day by day giving or taking away their wealth and their very life. As regards the prevalence of the Sun-cult in the prehistoric India, it is difficult to be so categorical as Maringer is for Europe, in view of the paucity and uncertainty[9] of materials at our disposal. On a Neolithic pottery from Piklihal[10] there is depiction of an encircled Sun (Fig. 1a). Barring this we failed to find any re-

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6. Marshall, Sir John, *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization,* vol. I, Preface, p. VII, has pointed out that 'in the religions of the Indus peoples there is much, of course, that may be paralleled in other countries'. E. B. Tylor in his *Researches into the Early History of Mankind,* London, 1865, adopted the comparative method and attributed similarities in beliefs and customs to "the like working of men's minds under like conditions". M. Wheeler, *Indus Civilization,* p. 90 writes, 'the Indus religion was a melange of much that we already know of third millennium Asiatic religious observances augmented by specific anticipations of the later Hinduism'.
7. *The Gods of Prehistoric Man,* pp. 197–200.
8. *Religion in Primitive Culture,* p. 372.
9. The Neolithic materials in India have not been discovered in abundance as compared to other aspects of Indian prehistoric archaeology. Moreover, there is scarcity of the tradition of the painted pottery in the Neolithic complex in India. See, Allchin, op. cit., p. 158.
10. See Allchin, F. R., *Piklihal Excavations,* pp. 26–77.

presentation of the Sun on them.[11] However, the absence of its representation cannot be taken as the conclusive evidence in favour of the view that there was no Sun-cult in the Neolithic cultures in India because the materials at present are very meagre and more materials may be discovered in future. Moreover, in other countries the Sun-cult had its origins in the prehistoric period.[12] In the case of India we feel that the indirect evidences supplied by the beliefs and practices of the primitive tribes and the testimonies of the rock-paintings point to the high antiquity of the Sun-cult in India. With the dawn of the farming economy the importance of the Sun as the source of light, energy, fertility and rain must have been recognized in India[13] too. From the protohistoric period onwards the representations of the Sun in various forms become a marked feature of the pottery designs, seal impressions and bead decorations in India. It is proposed to study the subject under three heads:

(A) The representation of the Sun in the rock paintings.

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(B) The representation of the Sun on the protohistoric objects.

(C) The Sun in the beliefs and practices of primitive tribes.

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[11] Ibid, *Utanur Excavations,* pp. 24—34, *I.A.R.,* 1960—63, *A.I.,* IV & XIII, *I.A.R.,* 1959-60, 63-64, 64-65, Subbarao, *Stone Age Cultures of Bellary,* Nagarajuna Rao, *Stone Age Hill Dwellers of Tekkalkota;* T. C. Sharma, A note on the Neolithic Pottery of Assam; *Man* 1967, pp. 126—28.

[12] Noss, J. B., *Man's Religions,* p. 10; cf. Olcott, W. T., *Sun lore of All Ages,* pp. 141—202; Frazer, J. G., *Worship of Nature,* Vol. I., Hastings, J., *E.R.E.,* vol. XII, pp. 48—103.

[13] It was long ago suggested that the Sun played a significant role in the pre-Vedic religion. See, Mehta, P. D., *Early Indian Religious Thoughts,* p. 18; Sur, A. K., Pre-Āryan Element in Indian Culture, *Calcutta Review,* 1932, pp. 293—303.

(A) *The Representation of the Sun in the Rock-Paintings*:

There is a lot of controversy regarding the date[14] of these paintings but the contents of these paintings definitely betray a primitive mind behind the work. The paintings may be of later date but the traditions depicted in them appear to be 'primitive'.[15] The rock-paintings contain a few symbols which are the conventional representations of the Sun. Therefore, their evidences may be taken for throwing light on the question of the beginning of Sun-worship. A brief description of a few representative symbols of the Sun on rock paintings is desirable.

On the paintings in the rock-shelters of Singanpur (Raigarh area) there is a direct representation of the rising Sun with seven rays[16] in the sky. There is a human figure below the rising Sun which appears to be in posture of worship (Pl. Ia). A similar representation of the half rising Sun is found on another rock painting from the same place[17] (Pl. Ib). Scholars[18] have tried to connect such representations with the seven horsed Sun of the Purāṇic tradition.

There are representations of the Sun in full radiance in the rock paintings from Sitakhardi (Chambal valley). Broadly speaking there are two varieties of such representations: the circle with radiating rays[19] and the circle with radiating rays but encircled by a bigger circle.[20] Figures of the Sun in full radiance usually in isolation but sometimes shown with other figures have been reported from Neolithic rock paintings of Europe also such as from Pala Pinta de Carlao in Portugal.[21] Similar figures are reported from Neolithic settlements of Iberian penninsula[22] as well. A comparative study of these symbols reveals that there is a marked similarity in them.

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[14] Gordon, D. H., *The Prehistoric Background of Indian Culture*, pp. 98–117. Rock-paintings in Mirzapur have been associated with certain phases of Neolithic of India. If we agree with the view the antiquity will easily go to atleast 4000 B.C. with a possibility of its being still earlier.

[15] Gupta, J., op. cit., pp. 558–62.

[16] Ibid., Sec. IX, pl. XII. Pl. I. Fig. 2.

[17] Ibid., pl. XV. Pl. I Fig. 3.

[18] Datta, Amarnath, *A Few Prehistoric Relics and the Rock Paintings of the Singanpur, Raigarh State* (C.P. India), p. XV.

[19] Gupta, op. cit., pl. XVIII, fig. 1.

[20] Ibid.

Besides these direct representations of the Sun there are many indirect representations of the Sun in the rock-paintings of India. One such instance is provided by the Svastika as an object of the worship in the rock-paintings from Baniaberi cave[23] (Panchmarhi area) (Fig. 1b). It may have been associated with the solar motion.

There are wheel like designs on rock paintings from Kabra Pahar. There are thirty-six spokes in them.[24] Similar representations of the wheel are seen on the Indus and the post-Indus potteries.[25] It is probable that the wheel was the symbolic representation of the Sun, particularly of its motion. The use of the red colour is also a characteristic feature of the rock-paintings of India. Its use may have been inspired by the redness of the Sun. From it the red colour became a symbol of life.

(B) *The Representation of the Sun on Protohistoric Objects*:

There are frequent and numerous representations of the Sun on potteries, seals, sealings, amulets and beads of the protohistoric period. However, no anthropomorphic representation of the Sun has been discovered from any protohistoric site in India. The representations of the Sun are mostly geometric and naturalistic. In addition to these there are a few animals which may have been sacred to, if not representative of, the Sun in the protohistoric cultures.

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[21] Maringer, op. cit., p. 164, fig. 46.

[22] Ibid., p. 169, fig. 49.

[23] Ibid., pl. IX.

[24] Ibid., p. XVII.

[25] Marshall, op. cit., Pl. LXXXVII, Fig. 3, Pl. III, Fig. 3.

Of the geometric representations the rayed orb in its variant forms is the most direct and popular symbol of the Sun. The design of rayed orb of many varieties is depicted on the potteries of many protohistoric cultures of India. Taking Harappa culture as the central point we may trace backward and forward both the existence of this tradition as is revealed by the pre-Harappan and post-Harappan potteries. It is not to be forgotten that this design figures on the rock-paintings[26] also. One of the varieties which is frequently found is that of a small point around which there is a bigger circle from which rays-like lines radiate (Fig. 1c). For example such a variety occurs on a sherd from Mohenjo-daro.[27] In this design there are fourteen rays-like lines. Mackay[28] also found a number of sherds with such roundels with rays. Similar design of rayed orb is depicted on a sherd from defences of Harappa.[29] Vats[30] has also reported a number of sherds with this design from both burial and habitational deposits. Some of them are circumscribed. The same motif appears also on some of the early potteries of Baluchistan.[31] Similar design is seen on a sherd from the Harappan level at Lothal.[32] The design continues to be represented on the post-Harappan pottery. For example, such a design is depicted on a sherd from Cemetery-H.[33] On some sherds in the degenerate phase of Harappa such a variety of rayed orb may also be traced.[34] It may be seen on the Malwa ware too from Navdatoli.[35] There are 10 rays in this sherd. They are found quite profusely on the Navdatoli pottery of the Chalcolithic period. In some there are two circles in place of one circle. Such variations are found at Mohenjo-daro[36] too. The number of rays also varies from[37] 10 to 16. The occurrence of Sun symbols in connection with burials in Cemetry-H has been interpreted in religious[38] terms. They represent the Star or the Sun-disc with rays shooting forth. The Nevasa ware of Jorwe fabric also contains rayed pattern but they differ from the typical Harappan tradition in the sense that the orb is not separated from the rays.[39] The excavators think that they along with other marks on them are potter's mark but accept that they may have some magical significance[40] too. This may be seen on Painted Grey Ware also.[41] The design of an orb with rays radiating from it has been seen depicted in graffiti[42] on the post-Harappan chalcolithic potteries such as from Rangpur, Bahal, Prakash as well as on the megalithic potteries from Kunnattur and Deccan. Even a non-specialist will take these designs to be those of the Sun in radiance and there can not be any mistake in regarding them as the 'conventional representation of the

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[26] Gupta, op. cit., pl. XVIII, fig. 1.

[27] Marshall, op. cit., pl. LXXXVIII. fig. 7.

[28] *Further Excavations at Mohenjo-daro*, pl. LXIX–18.

[29] Wheeler, R.E.M., Harappa 1946: The Defences and Cemetery R-37. *Ancient India*, No. 3, Pl. XLIV, Fig. 9.

[30] *Further Excavations at Harappa*, p. 216, Pl. LXII-18, 3, 9, LXI-10, LVIII-6, C-15, 63.

[31] Stein, A., An Archaeological Tour in Gedrosia, *A.S.I.M.*, No. 45, Pl. XV.

[32] Allchin, op. cit., p. 19.

[33] Ibid., op. cit., p. 315, Fig. 29-8; p. 148.

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[34] *Mārg,* vol. XIV, No. 3, June 1961, pl. XIII, p. 26.

[35] Ibid., pl. IV, Fig. 10.

[36] Marshall, op. cit.. pl. XVI, 13, 15, 16, XCII-24.

[37] Sankalia, H. D., Rao, B. & Deo, S., *The Excavations at Maheswar and Navdatoli,* p. 118, Fig. 51, XI-d, g, e and h.

[38] Vats, op. cit., p. 291.

[39] Sankalia, Rao and Ansari, *From History to Pre-History at Nevasa,* Fig. 111, p. 253.

[40] Ibid., p. 255.

[41] Ansari, Z. D., *A Comparative Study of Painted Motifs on the Painted Grey Ware,* unpublished paper read at the Seminar on Archaeology, Aligarh Muslim University, 1968, Fig. 1 (P.G.W.), No. 9.

[42] B. B. Lal, From the Megalithic to the Harappa: Tracing back the Graffiti on the pottery, *A.I.* No. 16, p. 12, Pl. XVII, symbol 17.

Sun with its rays.[43] As pointed out by Lal they may not be simply potter's or owner's marks. They are of religious significance in view of the fact that they occur on burial pots in addition to habitational pots. Sometimes the same symbol is repeated several times on the same pot as in the case of Kunnattur graffiti of the megalithic culture. Since graffiti has no purpose of decoration repetition of the motif particularly on burial pots may have been inspired by talismanic and amuletic purposes. There is a very interesting seal impression on a round tablet from Mohenjo-daro as it contains the depiction of an orb with flames shooting forth from it.[44] It is just like a fire-ball. It belongs to the variety of rayed orbs. It is no wonder if the Sun was symbolically represented by a fire ball. In the *Rigveda* the illuminating rays of the Sun have been likened with the blazing fires.[45] In the later Vedic literature it is said that a firebrand was employed as a symbol of the Sun when drawing water after sunset.[46] Such seal impressions appear to have been of religious significance and as suggested by Marshall[47] they are either amulets or votive offerings.

There are slight variations in the design of rayed orbs. Crescented orb with rays resembling half risen sun of the morning also appears on the protohistoric pottery (Fig. 1d). It is seen on a sherd from pre-Indus level at Mundigak.[48] It occurs on the pottery of Amri[49] in a pattern form. It appears on a sherd from the defence area of Harappa[50] but it is difficult to say whether originally it was meant to be like this or it was a full orb since the sherd is broken.

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[43] Lal, B. B., *AI.*, XVI., p. 12.

[44] Marshall, op. cit., CXVI-18.

[45] I. 50. 3–*Adriśramasya ketavo vi raśmayo janān anu/ bhrājanto agnayo yathā.*

[46] *S.B.* III. 9.2.9.

[47] op. cit., p. 397.

[48] Allchin, op. cit., p. 108.

[49] Ibid., 115.

[50] *A.I.* vol. 3, pl. XLIII, Fig. 2.

It is sparingly seen on potteries of the Harappa culture, but is depicted profusely on post-Harappan chalcolithic potteries as at Navdatoli,[51] Nevasa[52] and Lothal.[53]

Another variety is that of a circle with triangular rays shooting forth from it (Fig. 1e). It occurs on pre-Harappan Quetta ware.[54] It is found on the pottery from Cemetery-H.[55] It figures on chalcolithic Malwa ware from Navdatoli.[56] It may be recalled here that the symbol of the Sun at Sippara (Babylon) in the proto-historic period was a small circle with four triangular rays, the four angles between being occupied by a larger circle.[57] A naturalistic variation of the last variety is seen in a lotus like design (Fig. 1f) on the pre-Harappan pottery at Kotdiji[58] as well as on the Harappan pottery at Mohenjo-daro.[59] It is significant to note that it is depicted on the pottery of Harappan cemetery R-37.[60] In the later Hinduism the lotus was a regular cult symbol of the Sun-god.[61] In Egypt[62] the lotus was closely connected with the Sun-cult.

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[51] op. cit., Fig. 7-T-9a, Fig. 18-T-20, Fig. 17-T-20C, Fig. 41_T-62.

[52] op. cit., p. 248.

[53] *Mārg,* op. cit., pl. XI.

[54] Piggott, S., *A.I.* III, p. 140, Fig. 59.

[55] *A.I.* III, pl. XLV-2.

[56] Allchin, op. cit., 29-A.

[57] Olcott, op. cit., pp. 143-44.

[58] Allchin, op. cit., p. 119.

[59] Marshall, op. cit., pl. LXXXVII, 4, pl. XC, 19, 22; pl. XCI–27, 33; pl. XCIII-27.

[60] *A.I.*, III, p. 103, Fig. IX-g.

[61] *Matsya Purāṇa,* Chs. 74-5-9, 15, 16 and 18; 75-4, I, 12, Chs. 77, 78, 79, 85–89 and 98. Hamādri, *Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi* (Vrata Khaṇḍa), pt. II. pp. 328–33, 336-37. He says (p. 533) *"Uplipya śucam deśe Sūryaṁ tatra samaracayet/ Saṁlikhet tatra padmantu dvādaśayaṁ sakarnīkaṁ".*

[62] Wiedlemann, A., *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians,* pp. 138, 167.

The simplest symbol of the Sun appears to have been a simple circle or one with a plain or serrated spot in the centre[63] (Fig. 2a). It occurs on the pottery of pre-Harappan level at Kalibangan.[64] Of course in collective form their total effect is that of a mountain. It is seen on Amri and Kulli wares.[65] It is profusely found on the Harappan pottery[66] in the last example there is an additional feature in the sense that dots appear all round the circle. It is reported from the defence area as well.[67] It is found also on the Cemetery R-37 pottery.[68] Such symbols do continue appearing on the post-Indus Chalcolithic potteries such as from Lothal,[69] Jhukar[70] and Navdatoli.[71] This symbol is depicted on the rock paintings also. This reminds us of the Dravidian tradition of worshipping the Sun in its natural form as we are informed by Haradatta in his commentary on *Baudhāyana Dharmaśūtra.*[72] In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[73] too it is reported that a disc was placed in the *Agni-Cayana* as a symbol of the Sun. The *Sāmba Upa-Purāṇa*[74] also expressly says that in olden times the Sun was worshipped in the form it stood in the sky, that is in the disc form. The *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* (Brahma Parvan) also refers to the *maṇḍala* form of Sun-worship. In ancient Egypt the symbol of Aton-the Sun-god was a disc.[75]

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[63] Vats, op. cit., p. 291.

[64] Allchin, op. cit., p. 121.

[65] *A.I.* 14; Piggot, S., *Prehistoric India,* p. 101.

[66] Marshall, op. cit., XCII-26, 27, 31, 32; LXXXXVII-2.

[67] *A.I.,* III, p. 96, No. 39.

[68] Ibid., pl. XLVII.

[69] *Mārg,* op. cit., pl. XI.

[70] *A.I.,* 14.

[71] Sankalia, op. cit., Fig. 51-XI-G.

[72] II-11-29-16.

[73] VII-4-1-20.

[74] Ch. 29-2-6—*Na purā pratimā hy āsīt pūjyate maṇḍale raviḥ yathartan maṇḍalaṁ vyomni sthiyate savitustadā.*

[75] Breasted, J. H., *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt,* p. 320.

The wheel which is frequently represented on the protohistoric potteries and seals may have been another symbol of the Sun. The spoked wheel is depicted on the pottery of Mohanjo-daro.[76] It is one of the signs of the Indus writtings found on seals.[77] From Harappa too the wheel is reported on burial pottery.[78] This symbol is also seen on a Neolithic pottery from Piklihal.[79] Similar design. though resembling the taurine of later times, is seen depicted on the pottery from Rangpur.[80] The actual wheels in the Indus culture were solid while the representation is that of spoked wheel. It shows that the representation was not inspired by the actual wheel but by something different from it. Naturally the probability is that it might have been inspired by the imaginary wheel of the Sun's chariot so characteristically described in the Vedic as well as the Purāṇic literatures.[81] It is the representative of the solar motion.[82] The Celts employed the wheel as a symbol of the Sun-god.[83] In the western Europe the wheel was the symbol of the Sun in the Neolithic times.[84] In Babylonia the wheel was definitely a solar symbol as is evident from its representation on a stone tablet at Sippar. Here in front of Shamash, the Sun-god, there is a wheel with radiant spokes.[85] It was a popular solar symbol in the historic India as is evidenced by early Indian coins.[86] In the post-Vedic mythology *Cakra,* the wheel, was an emblem of Viṣṇu[87]—the Sun god of India. The wheel was used as the symbol of the Sun god in many Vedic sacrifices as the *Vājapeya*[88] *Agnicayana* and at the Solstial festival.[89]

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[76] Marshall, op. cit., pl. LXXXVII-3.

[77] Ibid., pl. CVII-Fig. 114, 126, 134, pl. CVIII—Figs. 189, 405, 547; Mackay, op. cit., pl. CVI—Figs. 13, 14, 22.

[78] Vats, op. cit., pl. LVIII—Figs. B-3, 5, 6; C-4.

[79] Allchin, F. R., *Piklihal Excavations,* p. 74.

[80] Allchin, B. & R., op. cit., p. 181, Fig. 44, No. 12.

[81] *R.V.,* VII-63-2; *Matsya P.,* CCLXI-1-7, XCIV-1, *Sūrya-śataka,* 67—70.

[82] Dumont, P. E., *J.A.O.S.,* vol. 53, pp. 324—34.

[83] Hastings, J., *E.R.E.,* vol. III, p. 301.

[84] Maringer, op. cit., p. 173.

[85] Jastrow, M., *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria,* p. 628.

[86] Banerjea, J. N., op. cit., p. 137.

The skirl device (Fig. 2b) is found on a seal at Mohenjo-daro.[90] A similar device is painted on the inside of certain bowls from Shahi-tump in Baluchistan which have four or five or six curvilinear arms.[91] Exactly the same idea is expressed in the motif on a seal at Mohenjo-daro where the heads and necks of various animals form the six arms of the skirl.[92] Its religious significance can be established on the ground that it occurs on seals, amulets and bead-amulets and it also occurs on specially made funerary ware. The frequency of the skirl motif on the Baluchistan pottery as represented at Shahi-tump implies that the device was intended there as of special importance. Its occurrence on funerary ware also suggests that the design was regarded as being beneficial in some way to the dead. Its rarity at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa shows that its significance had perhaps greatly decreased in later times. Since this motif resembles that of a lotus it appears reasonable to suggest that the skirl motif was replaced by the lotus in the Harappa and the post-Harappan culture since the lotus motif is found profusely represented on Harappa ware from Mohenjo-daro,[93] and the post-Harappan wares such as from Navdatoli.[94] The skirl device is used by the Babylonians[95] as well. In historic India[96] too this device was used. In view of its similarity with the lotus it is reasonable to suggest that it was a solar device[97] since the lotus was a regular symbol of the Sungod in its cult-form in historic India as may be seen from the solar iconography and the Purāṇas.[98]

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[87] Gonda, J., *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism*, pp. 96 ff.

[88] Weber, *Vājapeya*, p. 20, 34f.

[89] *O.R.V.*, 88, n. 4.

[90] Mackay, op. cit., pl. XCVII-6-41, C-g.

[91] Stein, A., op. cit., pl. XV, XVI.

[92] Marshall, op. cit., CXII-383.

[93] Marshall, op. cit., LXXXVII-4, XC-22, 19, XC-I, 133, 27, XCIII-23.

[94] Allchin, B. & R., op. cit., pl. 29A.

[95] Legrian, L., *The Culture of the Babylonians*, pl. LV, Fig. 877, 882, 883, 885.

[96] *Man* 1929, Geometrical Designs of Madras Presidency and note on Geometrical Ritual Design in India, pl. E, Sec. D-60 (1933), Sec. 1-68.

The svastika is very popularly represented on seals, sealings, amulets and beads of the Harappa culture.[99] It may be seen on the post-Harappan Shahi-tump pottery.[100] It is found in the graffiti of chalcolithic wares from Rangpur and Navdatoli as well on megalithic potteries from Coorg and Coimbtore.[101] The sacred character of the Svastika is well recognized all-over the world,[102] and it was a popular religious symbol in historic India as well. It is still regarded as a religious symbol.[103] Diverse opinions have been expressed on the original significance of the Svastika.[104] It has been suggested[105] that originally it was a representative symbol of the Sun in motion. From this it came to symbolise the astronomical motion in general. Ultimately it came to represent everything which moves i.e. which has life, hence it terminated into an auspicous symbol of general prosperity and abundance. The solar origin of the Svastika is indicated by certain external evidences. In the ancient Maya culture it adorned a stone slab which also bore the image of the solar disc exactly as in Gaul, Italy, Asia-Minor, and East India.[106] Upon a vase now at Vienna it appears as an ornament upon the breast of Apollo,[107] the Sungod of Greece. The Emperess We of China (684—704 A.D.) decreed that it should be used as a symbol of the Sun.[108] The Bonpos tribe of Tibet employed it as a solar symbol.[109] It is used for talismanic purposes as a charm against evils, witches and other evil spirits. This is indicated by such facts as its occurrence on amulets, seals and beads and its repetition on a sherd.[110] Similar Svastika symbols are reported from Bruce Foot's collection.[111] A scene of its worship is found in the rock-paintings of Bania Beri.[112]

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[97] Dumont, P. E., op. cit., pp. 331-32.

[98] Banerjea, J. N., op. cit., p. 109.

[99] Marshall, op. cit. (on seals), pl. CXIV—Figs. 500--515; Mackay, op. cit. (on amulets), pl. LXXXII, Nos. 1, 2, 3, pl. XCI, No. 1, pl. CII, No. 1 & 11 (on beads) pl. LXXXVI, 172, LXXXVIII—320; As a brand on cattle XCVIII, 619 & 624; Vats, op. cit., pl. XCIII, 306 & 317; pl. XCV-392, 396, 399;*A.I.* No. 14.

[100] Vats, op. cit., LXVIII, No. 72.

[101] A.I. 16, pl. XIV, p. 4, 6, 1, 2.

[102] Brown, *Swastika,* pp. 17, 18; Marshall, op. cit., p. 374.

[103] Marshall, J., op. cit., p. 426.

[104] Hastings, J., *E.R.E.,* vol. IV, p. 328.

[105] Thomas, E.B., *Indian Swastika and its western counterpart*, pp. 18—43; Ferm, V., *Encyclopaedia of Religion,* p. 752; Hastings, J., *E.R.E.,* vol. IV, p. 328; Birdwood, G., *Old Records of Indian Office,* p. x ff, Dumont, op. cit., pp. 326—34.

Besides animism and fetishism, theriomorphism had also been a characteristic feature of the primitive religion and it is true for pre-Vedic India too. It is suggested that an independent bull-cult was in existence in the Harappa culture.[113] It does not appear to be related to the so-called protohistoric Śiva at this stage as the bull is conspicuous by its absence on the seal where the so-called proto-historic Śiva is depicted. In some protohistoric civilizations of the world the bull was sacred to the Sungod. The fierce aspect of the Sun is shown on the Sumerian seals in the Bull of the Heaven whose body is filled with flames and whose onslaught brings about seven years famine. The seals show bulls whose bodies end in mountains, the habitat of the

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[106] *E.R.E.*, vol. IV, p. 327.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Wilson, *The Swastika*, p. 2.

[109] Franke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, (Cal. 1914), vol. I, pl. XLIV-B.

[110] Vats, op. cit., pl. LXVIII, No. 72.

[111] Dikshitar, V.R.R., *Prehistoric South India*, pp. 109, 120.

[112] Gupta, J., op. cit., p. 418.

[113] Marshall, op. cit., p. 72.

Sun.[114] Osiris in whom the solar element was mixed up in his capacity as the earth-dweller was worshipped under the form of the bull—Apis.[115] In other ancient cultures of the world the bull was associated with the Sun on account of its strength and fertility. In the *Rigveda*.[116] Sūrya is called a bull. In the *Atharvaveda*[117] Rohita—the Sungod is addressed as the bull arranging the day and night and in many rites the bull is a symbol of the Sun.[118] In view of all these evidences it is suggested that the bull-worship represents the theriomorphic aspect of Sun-worship.

It is suggested[119] that the unicorn or urus bull so profusely represented on the Indus seals[120] may have been a symbol of the Sungod. There is a curious object with rays in association with the Urus-bull which may be taken as the Sun-disc. No-where else has it been possible to find pictured representation of an animal so intimately connected with the Sun-disc and the disc, peculiarly shaped, itself without the animal is rarely seen. It may be compared with what appears to be a solar disc of the Bukk culture of Danube[121] and also with a figure but with four arms only on an ivory seal from Knossos.[122] The Sun is also represented in a somewhat similar manner on a pottery seal from Kish and on similar seals from Susa.[123] These Sun-symbols became stylized at a later date into the form seen on early Cappadocian and Macedonian pottery where the rays are hook-like and are more numerous. Viṣṇu, the Sungod of India was called *eka-śriṅga* and the unicorn of the Indus valley people reminds us of this feature of the Sungod.[124] In the Tantras of later times the one-horned animal stands both for the earth and the Sun.[125]

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[114] Olcott, op. cit., p. 295.

[115] Cerny, S., *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 26, 136-7.

[116] V-47-3; X-189-1.

[117] XIII-2-43-44 uses the word *'Mahiṣaḥ'* for the Sun.

[118] IV. 38, V. 7, IV. 2.

[119] Mackay, op. cit., p. 339.

[120] Ibid., pl. XCVIII-c (g).

[121] Childe Gordon, *Danube in Prehistory*, p. 61.

[122] Evans, *Palace of Minos, I,* 118, Fig. 87, No. 5, II, p. 196; Fig. 105 (C).

[123] Mackay, *Anthropological Memoirs, Field Museum, Chicago,* vol. I, pl. XLII-5.

The concept of a solar bird had been quite prominent among many ancient civilizations. Among the Egyptians the falcon was the sacred bird of the Sungod.[126] In Babylonia too the Sungod was represented by a bird.[127] Among the Greeks Apollo—the Sungod had the swan as sacred to him.[128] In the Vedic literature there are many references to the Sun-bird.[129] Garuḍa became the classic sun-bird of India.[130] There are representations of the eagle or the falcon on the Indus seals and pottery.[131] On Cemetery-H pottery too we find birds in association with the rayed orbs of the Sun. It may be suggested that the eagle or falcon of the proto-historic India foreshadows the tradition of the Sun-bird of later times.[132]

There are representations of the Sun-like designs on the burial pottery of the proto-historic as well as of the megalithic periods. They may be seen on wares of Cemetery R-37[133] as well as of H[134] and of Shahi-tump.[135] The rayed orbs and Svastikas are found in graffiti on the megalithic pottery from Kunnatur, Coorg and Coimbtore.[136] From Cemetery-H area a very interesting pottery motif revealing the ideas of future life after death has come to light. Vats[137] has tried to explain the significance of this motif in the light of the Vedic mythology. In this motif the Sun-symbols may be seen. The peacocks alternate with rayed orbs. In the body of each peacock' there is a human figure. It has been suggested[138] that the peacock is carrying the subtle body to heaven. In view of the fact that there is repetition of the Sun-symbol in this motif along with the peacock the Sungod appears to have been of some special significance in the cult of the dead.

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[124] Marshall, op. cit., p. 69.

[125] Shankaranand, Swami, *Rigvedic Culture of Prehistoric Indus*, p. 103. He argues for the solar origin of Axe, Tree, Liṅga and Yūpa-cults in the Indus valley civilization. The sun is of such a predominating and all pervading nature that its features might have entered into many cults of ancient times particularly when the farming culture has been predominant since it plays vital role in the vegetation and the farming world but it is to be noted that many cults in spite of their solar features developed an independent status from their central conceptions.

[126] Breasted, op. cit., 9, p. 109.

[127] See, Farnell, *Greece and Babylon*, pp. 55 ff, 75 ff, 225 ff.

[128] Ibid.

[129] *R.V.*, X-177-1, 2. V-47-3; VII-63-5-; V-45-9.

[130] Gonda, op. cit., p.

[131] Marshall, op. cit., CVI-93.

[132] Vats, op. cit., p. 324.

In the Vedic mythology[139] it is said that through Agni, the divine bird, men go to the highest place of the Sun, to the highest heaven, to the world of the righteous wither the ancient, the earliest born seers have gone. In the *Rigveda*[140] the abode of the fathers is spoken of as the highest point of the Sun. The fathers are united with the Sun[141] and are connected with the rays of the Sun.[142] A bird, either the owl or the pigeon is said to be the messenger of Yama.[143] In later literature of India the concept of the Sun as the home of the dead continues to be held.[144] In view of all these it may be suggested that among the primitive peoples of India there was a belief in the solar world to which the spirits of the dead were supposed to repair.[145] This pre-Vedic belief continues in the Vedic and the post-Vedic times. The Sun-god appears to have played important role in the eschatalogy of the proto-historic cultures of India.

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[133] *A.I.*, III, p. 103, Fig. 14-IX-g, 114-Fig. 22 XLIA.

[134] Allchin, op. cit., 148, Figs. 29-8.

[135] Stein, op. cit., pl. XV, XVI.

[136] *A.I.*, vol. 16, pl. XIII-1, 4.

[137] op. cit., pp. 206—9.

[138] Ibid.

[139] V.S., 18, 51-2.

[140] IX-113-9.

[141] *R.V.*, X-107-2, 154-3.

[142] Ibid., I-109-7; *S.B.*, 1-9-2-10.

[143] *R.V.*, X-165-4.

There is a symbol found on the Kulli ware[146] and the same is repeated on the Malwa ware at Navdatoli.[147] This symbol (Fig. 2c) consists of the conventional representation of the Sun with a standard fixed in a triangular or circular vase. A variant of this may be seen on an Indus seal.[148] In this case a radiant Sun-like design circumscribed by a circle is found represented on a triangular vase kept on the back of a bull. It is a rare design as it is found on one seal only. The obvious look of the motif gives the impression that it was an object of faith. Since it is accepted that there was a bull-cult as well as a standard-cult in the Indus culture,[149] it is reasonable to suggest that this motif as well as that on Kulli and Navdatoli wares represents the cult-form of Sun-worship. In the *Sāmba upa-Purāṇa*[150] there are references to the flag staff of Ravi—the Sungod. The representation of a Sun-standard is seen on a local coin of Avanti.[151] The Lālā Bhagat Sūrya image appears to have been on a pillar which may have been a standard.[152]

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[144] *S.B.*, I-9-3-10.

[145] Sastri, K. A. N., *New Light on the Indus Civilization*, vol. I, p. 5.

[146] See Allchin, op. cit.

[147] Allchin, op. cit., pl. 29-b.

[148] Marshall, op. cit., pl. CIII-16.

[149] Marshall, op. cit., p. 384.

[150] Ch. 33.

[151] Smith, V. A., *Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum Calcutta, vol. I*, p. 153, pl. XX-2; Srivastava, V. C., The Religious Study of a Symbol on an Avanti coin, *Memoir No. 2, B.H.U. Seminar on Local Coins, Varanasi.*

[152] Banerjea, J. N., op. cit., p. 433, pl. XXIX, Fig. 1.

There is a reference[153] in the *Mahābhārata* to a king named '*Sūryadhvaja*'. The tradition of *Garudadhvaja* was already there in ancient India.[154] In view of all these it is suggested that there may have been a tradition of solar standard in the pre-Vedic society but it must have been limited in view of scarcity of this motif on the protohistoric materials.

(C) *The Sun in the Beliefs and Practices of Primitive Tribes*:

A critical study of the practices of the primitive tribes of India may also throw valuable light on the beginning ~~of Sun~~-worship in India. Tylor[155] has shown that Sun-worship had been a very widely prevalent phenomenon among the primitive tribes of the world and in India too such instances are not absent. The primitive tribes of India have been divided into two classes:

(a) Kolarians consisting of Koles, Koches, Santhals and Savaras in the main and

(b) Dravidians consisting of Khonḍs, Gonḍs, Oraons and Ṭoḍas.

The Gonḍs[156] used to worship a representation of the Sun by means of human sacrifices. It used to be in the nature of a feast in which are combined fertility rites as well. The Khonḍs[157] worship the Sun as the chief divinity. They had a belief in one supreme God, 'a theism embracing polytheism' and other notions which have been abstracted from their worship of the Sun as the great god. The chief god among them is the light or the Sungod who created a wife—Tari—the goddess of earth, the source of evil while the Sungod is a good god. Tari tried to prevent Bella Pennu—the Sungod from creating man. But he created man. The dark goddess—Tari sowed the seed of sin in man. Death came to men. The Sungod was victorious while others say that Tari continues the struggle. There are four kinds of fate of man after death. One of this is that the soul goes to the Sun. It is similar to the belief of the Āryans that the Sun is the home of the dead. The chief feast to the Sungod is Salo-Katho which is something like the Soma-feast. Since it is held at harvest time Sun-worship appears to have been connected with harvest and fertility. It is something like the Pongal festival of south India.

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[153] *MBH* (Gita Press Ed.) Ādi Parva, 185. 10.

[154] Jaiswal, Suvira, *The Origin and Development of Vaiṣṇavism*, p. 153.

[155] *Religion in the Primitive Culture*, pp. 371—84.

[156] Hopkins, *Religions of India*, pp. 526-27.

Like the Khonds the Oraons[158] recognize a supreme god in the Sun but do not pray him because he does no harm. The Santhals[159] worship the Sun as the highest spirit. The Koles also worship the Sun but with the moon as his wife and the stars as their children. The Muṇḍas also worship the Sungod. The Boḍos and Dhimals[160] consider the Sun as an elemental god in the pantheon though in practical rank below the sacred rivers. Such tribes as Ballas of Bombay and Toḍas of south India worship the Sun at present also.[161] The above review of the practices of the primitive tribes of India brings forth some common characteristics of Sun-worship. The Sun was worshipped as the highest spirit. He used to be worshipped in symbolitical form. He was essentially a good god. His worship was intimately connected wth fertility and harvest. The Sun was regarded as the home of the dead. The worship was in the nature of human or animal sacrifices. All these features have been traced in the prehistoric and protohistoric cultures of India as is revealed by the archaeology.

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157. Hopkins., R.I., pp. 528–32.

[158] Ibid., p. 533; Dalton, Kols in *Trans. Eth. So.*, vol. VI, p. 33.

[159] Ibid., p. 534; Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*, p. 184.

[160] Hodgson, *Aboriginals of India*, pp. 167, 175.

[161] Oppert, Gustav, *The Original inhabitants of India*, pp. 78, 79, 188, 557.

Thus the beginning of Sun-worship in India may be traced back in the pre-Vedic times. In view of the representations of the Sun in various forms on the protohistoric seals, potteries, amulets and beads combined with the evidence of Sun-worship among the non-Āryan primitive tribes of India it is suggested that the Sun was worshipped by the chalcolithic people of India. The Sun was worshipped symbolically. The direct representation of the Sun-disc with rays was a popular mode of Sun-worship. It had a variety of forms such as circles and cross-hatchings. Other symbols were the wheel, the Svastika, the skirl-device and the lotus. The worship was animistic and felishistic. Theriomorphism was also practised. The bull, the unicorn and the falcon or the pigeon appear to have been sacred to the Sun-god. The Sun appears to have been essentially a benevolent deity who was worshipped on account of his immense role in the agriculture and the vegetation. He was the source of light, energy and fertility. There is no evidence of the anthropmorphic worship of the Sun in this period. The natural form of the Sun as seen in the sky was the object of worship.

In the protohistoric eschatalogy the Sungod played a significant role. The theory of the Sun as the home of the dead so characteristically developed by the Vedic Āryans might have been known to them. Whether the worship was in the nature of a cult or it was general it is definitely not known. In view of a Sun-like symbol in cult form on Kulli and Navdatoli pottery and Indus seal the cult form is suggested but it must have been confined to a limited circle in view of the scarcity of such motif.

The antiquity of Sun-worship may be further pushed back. It must have begun with the dawn of the farming economy in India also as is the case with Europe. But in the case of India no definite evidence has come in this respect for the Neolithic period. No doubt there are a few paintings in the rock shelters which contain representations of the Sun as an object of worship. Some of these paintings have been connected with the Neolithic complex in India. Moreover there is a representation of an encircled Sun on the Neolithic pottery from Piklihal. The rarity of the Sun-symbols on the Neolithic potteries of India can not be taken as a conclusive evidence for the non-existence of Sun-worship among the Neolithic farmers of India because there is a rarity of the painted pottery of the Neolithic complex in India. In view of the evidences of the rock-paintings and the representation of the Sun at Piklihal combined with the evidence of the European archaeology we are inclined to suggest that the beginning of Sun-worship may be pushed back to the Neolithic times, if not earlier.

CHAPTER III

THE VEDIC TRADITION

The Sun has been one of the most impressive phenomena of nature which has evoked admiration and reverence from man all over the world in ancient times.[1] Vedic India too had a vigorous tradition of Sun-worship which forms an integral part of Nature-worship so prominently practised by the Indo-Āryans.[2] No doubt, the worship of the Sun is one of the common features of the religious lives of the Indo-Europeans, the Indo-Irānians and the Indo-Āryans.[3] It is indicated by the presence of a common word[4] for the Sun in many Āryan languages. The very concept of god among the Āryans was based upon the phenomenon of light[5] whose chief source was the Sun. The Indo-Āryans inherited a great tradition of Sun-worship from the Indo-Irānians and the Indo-Europeans. They continued the heritage with more vigour and enthusiasm[6] as is

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1. Tylor, E. B., *Religion in Primitive Culture,* p. 372; *E.R.E.,* vol. XII, pp. 48—103; Olcott, W. T., *The Sun Lore of All Ages,* pp. 141—202.
2. Macdonell, A. A., *V.M.,* p. 2; cf. *O.R.V.,* pp. 591—94.
3. Schrader, O., Āryan Religion. *E.R.E.,* vol. II, pp. 32-33; Hodivala, S. K., *Indo-Irānian Religion,* p. 70; cf. Yasna. I. 35; Cox, W., *The Mythology of the Āryan Nations,* pp. 201, f.n.l; Schroeder, L., Von, *Arische Religion,* ii, 3ff.
4. The variants of *Sūrya* are as follows: *Hvare* (Avestan), *Sol* (Latin), *Sauil* (Goth), *Heure* (Welsch), *Saule* (old Prussian), *Saule* (Lith). See Buck, C. D., *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages,* p. 54.
5. The common name *deivos* is derived from the root *div=* to shine. A few variants of it are *deva* (Sans), *deus* (Latin), *dieva* (Lith), *dia* (Irish), *diev* (Latvian). See Buck, op. cit., p. 1464.
6. Meillet, quoted by L. Renou, *Vedic India,* p. 56; Konow, Stein, Indo-European Religious Ideas in Ancient India, *A.B.O.R.I.,* vol. VI, pp. 59—66.

evident from the galaxy of solar gods that is unfolded before us by the Vedic texts.[7] It is more than probable that they found an indigenous stream of Sun-worship in India which must have gone a long way in the evolution of Sun-worship in the Vedic age and subsequently. It is not possible in our present state of knowledge to tell exactly as to how much the tradition of Sun-worship as depicted in the Vedic literature is Āryan and how much it is non-Āryan. But there is no denying the fact that the Vedic literature presents a mixed picture of the Āryan and non-Āryan traditions of Sun-worship.[8]

Variety of The Sun-Gods:

The Sun was worshipped under various forms and names in the Vedic tradition. It is specifically said[9] that priests and poets with words make into many the bird (=the Sun) that is but one. Yāska has also pointed out[10] that in the opinion of his predecessors there are only three deities—Agni, Vāyu and Sūrya and each of these has various appellations according to differences in functions. This is indicated in the *Rigveda*[11] itself and is expressed in clear terms in the later Vedic literature.[12] In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*[13] Kauṣītaki specifically instructs his son to worship the Sun in different forms by differentiating between Āditya and his rays. The *Brihaddevatā* which subscribes to the[14] view of Yāska has stated the reasons for the multiplication of the Sun-gods. According to him there are diversities of names[15] due to differences in functions and spheres. It appears that the Sun was worshipped in the Vedic period in its different positions such as the rising Sun, the Sun at its zeneth, the setting Sun and the nocturnal Sun. Sūrya is the rising Sun.[16] That the rising Sun was worshipped is indicated also by the performance of the Agnihotra which has been taken as a spell to aid the rising of the Sun.[17] In the Grihya Sūtras there are references to the worship of the Sun in the morning.[18] Vivasvat has also been taken by some scholars as the rising Sun.[19] In Savitri we find the features of the setting Sun,[20] though he is connected with the rising Sun too.[21] Varuṇa has been taken as the nocturnal Sun.[22] As antithesis to Varuṇa Mitra is the Sun-god of the day.[23]

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[7] Barth, A., *Religions of India*, p. 256; Hopkins, E. W., *The Religions of India*, p. 41; Renou, op. cit., pp. 40–56; Venkatacharya, C., The Sun and its conceptions in the Vedas, *A.I.O.C.*, vol. III, pp. 6–8.

[8] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 12.

[9] *R.V.*, X. 114. 5, *Suparṇaṁ viprāḥ kavayo vacobhirekaṁ santaṁ bahudhā kalpayanti.*

[10] *N.* VIII-5. *Tāsāṁ mahābhāgyād ekaisyā api bahūni nāṁdheyāni bhavanti| Api vā karmaprithaktvāt.*

[11] I. 139. 11, X. 158. 1.

[12] *M.S.*, IV. 2. 12; Kātyāyana, *Sarvānukramani*, 2. 8, Sāyaṇa on *R.V.* I. 139. 11.

[13] *C.U.*, I. 5.2. *Kauṣītakih putramuvāc raśmīn stvaṁ paryāvartayādbahavo vi te bhaviṣyantītyadhidaivataṁ.*

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[14] I. 69. *'Agnirasminnathendrastu madhyato vāyurev ca/ Sūryo divīti vigyeyās tisra eveh devatāḥ/*

[15] II. 20, *Vibhūtisthānasambhavaṁ.*

[16] See, *R.V.*, VIII. 63:
(1) *Udveti subhago viśva cakṣāḥ.*
(2) *Udveti prasvītā janānāṁ mahān, keturaraṇavaḥ Sūryasya.*
(3) *Vibhrājmān uṣasāmupasthādrebhairudetyanudyamānaḥ.*
(4) *divo rukma urucakṣā udeti,* VI.52.5—*paśyema nu Sūryamuccarantaṁ.*
cf. Grisworld, *H.D., R.R.*, p. 267.

[17] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, vol. II, pp. 316–18.

[18] *A.G.S.* I. 9. 7; *S.G.S.* I. 3. 14; *G.G.S.* IV. 6. 12. 14; IV. 9. 4; *H.G.S.* I. 3. 9. 7, 10.

[19] Roth, *P.W., Z.D.M.G.*, 4, 425.

[20] *R.V.* II. 38, IV. 53. 6, VII. 45. 1; Hopkins, op. cit., p. 46; *A.V.*, VI. 1; cf. Griswold, op. cit., p. 272; *S.B.*, XIII. 6. 1. 9.

[21] *R.V.*, X. 139. 1; I. 95. 7; Macdonell, op. cit., p. 34 connects him with the morning and the evening Sun both.

[22] Chattopadhyay, K. C., quoted by G. C. Pande, *Studies in the origins of Buddhism*, p. 268. Sāyaṇa on *R.V.*, VII. 87. 1 *astaṁ gacchan Sūrya eva Varuṇa iti ucyate.*

[23] Sāyaṇa on *R.V.* I. 89.3—*aharabhimānināṁ devaṁ maitraṁ vai ahar iti srutiḥ*

That the Sun was worshipped at different periods of the day is clearly stated in the Vedic literature.[24] Kauṣītaki used to worship the Sun at the rising, the noon and the setting.[25] *Saṁdhyopāsanā* which was a form of Sun-worship was also performed at different periods of the day either twice or thrice.[26] In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* seven periods of the day are mentioned for the worship of the Sun.[27] Thus it is indicated that the variety of names and forms of the Sun was caused by its worship at different times of the day. In ancient Egypt also the Sun was worshipped in varying positions and at different times.[28]

Another reason for the multiple names and forms of the Sun-god in the Vedic period was that different aspects of the Sun were worshipped giving rise to independent Sun-gods. For example, the stimulative aspect of the Sun came to be worshipped under the name of Savitri.[29] Mitra represents the friendly and beneficient nature of the Sun.[30] Sūrya is particularly connected with the light-giving aspect of the Sun.[31] Pūṣan was the Sun-god of prosperity[32] and was chiefly connected with the pastoral and commercial life. In the Aśvins the healing aspect of the Sun is very prominent.[32]

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24. *R.V.*, I. 35.10; *K.B.*, II. 2, II. 8.
25. *K.U.*, II.7. . . .*trīnyupāsanāni bhavanti*.
26. G. G. 5.IV.6.2., *S.G.S.* II.5., *A.G.S.* III.7.4.6. Kane, P. V., *History of Dharmaśāstra*, vol. II, pp. 315–21.
27. II.9.1–8.
28. Olcott, op. cit., pp. 150-51; Jayna, W. A., *The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilizations*, pp. 10, 127, 327.
29. Macdonell, *V.M.*, 34; *J.R.A.S.*, vol. 27, pp. 951-52; Griswold, op. cit., p. 275; *O.R.V.*, pp. 64-65; Yāska, *N*, X.31 says that Savitri means *Sarvasya prasavitā*.
30. Macdonel, *V.M.*, p. 30; Winternitz, M., *H.I.L.* p. 76; Ghate, *Lectures on the Rigveda*, p. 145; Roth, *Z.D.M.G.*, vol. II, p. 70; Muir, J., *O.S.T.*, vol. V, pp. 69–71.
31. *R.V.*, I.50.5; IV.13.4; VII.63.1; X.37.4.
32. Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 37; cf. *R.V.*, VI.48.15; VI.55.2, 3.
33. Macdonell, *V. M.*, p. 52; The legends of Cyavāna, (*R.V.*, I.11.6.10) ; Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 60; *S.B.*, IV.1.5) ; Kali (*R.V.*, X.39.8), Vimada (*R.V.*, I.102.10; I.116.1) ; Viṣṇāpū

Tribal and family differences[34] among the Indo-Āryans also appear to have been responsible for the multiplication of names and forms of the Sun-god. Pūṣan was specially favoured by the Bharadvājas.[35] They seem comparatively indifferent to the Aśvins. The Atris and the Vasiṣṭhas favour the Asvins.[36] The Vasiṣṭhas take more interest in Viṣṇu than others.[37]

Social and occupational differences[38] among the Āryans and non-Āryans also might have contributed to the evolution of many gods out of the one and the same natural phenomenon. In the case of Sun-worship such socio-economic factors appear to have been operative. Savitri on account of his connection with stimulation, sacrifices and wisdom[39] appear to have been a favourite god of the intelligentia of the Vedic society. In the later Vedic literature[40] there are ample references to the effect that the intellectual classes, particularly the Brāhmaṇas consider Savitri-worship by means of the Gāyatrī hymn as essential for spiritual upliftment. Sūrya has been called as the priest[41] of the gods which may tend to show that he was connected with the Brāhmaṇas. Pūṣan appears to have been connected with the business community.[42] Indra was a favourite god of the fighting classes.[43] In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*[44] the

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(*R.V.*, I.116.23; 117.7; X.65.12); Rijrāśva (*R.V.*, I.116.16; 117.17, 18); Parāvrij (*R.V.*, I.112.8); Ghoṣā (*R.V.*, I.117.7, X.39.3,6, 40.5), etc. show the succouring powers of the Aśvins.

[34] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 92.

[35] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 35; Hillebrandt, *V.M.*, iii. p. 367.

[36] Hillebrandt, op. cit., iii, p. 394.

[37] Ibid., p. 347.

[38] Renou, L., op. cit., p. 56; Griswold, op. cit., p. 51.

[39] Macdonell, *V.M.*, pp. 32–34.

[40] *Śvet. U.*, IV.18. In the Brāhmaṇas and the Sūtras Savitri is the chief deity in the initiation ceremony.

[41] *R.V.*, VIII.90.12–*asuryaḥ purohitaḥ*.

[42] *R.V.*, VI.53, 3, 5, 6, 7 connect him with the *Paṇis*.

[43] Kaegi, A., *The Rigveda*, p. 43; Griswold, op. cit., p. 191.

oblations to different gods are being given at the houses of persons of different profession. For example, the oblations to Pūṣan, Aśvins, and Savitri are to be given respectively at the houses of a divider, a charioteer and a carver. It is not possible in our present state of knowledge to be more precise and definite in this matter, but it is indicated that socio-economic factors also contributed their share in the multiplication of the Sun-gods. In ancient Babylonia too the Sun was worshipped under various names as Shamash, Babbar, Utu, etc., but there the main reason for this variety of names was that different localities had their own name of the Sun-god.[45] In Vedic India such factor does not seem to have been operative because there is no indication in the Vedic literature that a particular god was a deity of a particular locality. The concept of a city-god so prominent in ancient Babylonia and Greece appears to have been foreign to Vedic India.[46] The main reason lies in the fact that the Āryans being foreigners[47] had no sense of attachment to a particular city. Secondly, the political theory of the age was in favour of national states as is evident from such term as *Sārvabhauma, Ekrāṭa, Samrāṭa*, etc. and the practices of the Rājasūya and the Aśvamedha.[48] Thirdly, the Vedic religion has passed the stage of that primitiveness whose characteristic is the worship of a city or village deity.[49] Thus a number of factors may have been responsible for the emergence of many Sun-gods in the Vedic period but the above review should not be taken to mean that there was some sort of exclusiveness of traits

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[44] *T.S.*, I.88.

[45] Jastrow, M., *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 73.

[46] There are references to tutelary deities such as Vastoṣpati (*R.V.*, VII.54) and Kṣetrapati (*R.V.*, IV.57) in the Vedic literature but there is no mention of a city-deity or a village-deity as such.

[47] The question of the original home of the Āryans is still unsettled, but the probability is that they were foreigners.

[48] *R.V.*, VIII.37.3; *A.B.*, VIII.15; *A.V.*, III.4.1; cf. Weber, *Rājasūya*. 141.

[49] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 2.

in the personality of the Sun-gods. There is always interaction and mixing of different aspects and functions among different Sun-gods.

Solar Group of Gods:

It is a trite triusm to say that there is a group of the Sun-gods in the Vedic literature.[50] Generally it is agreed that Sūrya, Savitri, Mitra, Viṣṇu, Pūṣan and Bhaga are the members of this group. Some scholars include Vivasvat, the Aśvins and the Ādityas also in this group.[51] It is well known that the original nature of the Vedic deities is a matter of keenest controversy. A critical study of the features of the Vedic gods will reveal that the nature-background is a marked feature of the Vedic mythology but at the same time anthropomorphic concept of the gods has also been developed.[52] It is another matter that the Vedic anthropomorphism is not fully developed as it is in the Epics but it can not be denied that in many cases the element of nature has receded in the background giving scope for anthropomorphism. The Vedic gods were conceived in theriomorphic and fetishistic forms[53] also. All these trends may be seen in the Sun-gods of the Vedic tradition. In anthropomorphic form itself three categories of the Sun-gods can be marked on the basis of degree of anthropomorphism and their relationship with the Sun. Sūrya, for instance, is the direct personification of the atmospheric Sun.[54] In view of the fact that the Sun is seen daily to everybody no real anthropomorphic figure of him could be developed in the Vedic literature. In the later Vedic age Āditya became a synonymn of Sūrya and falls in the first category of the Sun-gods. Second category consists of those Sun-gods whose connection with the nature is not so intimate as in the case of first category and who have come to represent some aspect of the Sun. In such cases there is greater scope for anthropomorphism. Savitri, for example, represents the stimulating aspect of the Sun which is more prominent than his association with the elements of nature. Viṣṇu, Pūṣan, Mitra, Vivasvat, the Aśvins and Ādityas fall in this category as all of them represent some particular quality or aspect of the Sun rather than the solar orb.[55]

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[50] Barth, op. cit., p. 41; Hopkins, op. cit., p. 41.

[51] Renou, op. cit., pp. 40—56.

[52] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, pp. 58 ff.

[53] Ibid., pp. 61—68.

[54] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 30.

There is a third category of the Sun-gods in the Vedic literature which is comprised of those gods whose original basis appears to have been solar but who have completely dissociated themselves from this basis and have come to be worshipped on account of their some leading trait independently of the Sun.

In Indra[56] and Varuṇa the solar basis may be traced but on account of their independent position they can not be included into the list of the Sun-gods. Similar are the cases of Aja-Ekapāda[57] and Gandharvas[58] in the Vedic literature. Therefore, the Sun-gods of the first and second categories only are included in the solar group of the Vedic times.

VEDIC CONCEPT OF THE SUN-GODS

A. SŪRYA

Sūrya is the most concrete of the solar deities[59] as he represents the simplest and most direct form i.e. the round red orb of the Sun.[60] The identity of the orb and Sūrya has been specifically indicated in the *Rigveda.*[61] This connection with the luminary is very intimate in the *Rigveda.*[62] The daily rising of the Sun is too often referred to which tends to show that the connection of Sūrya with the physical phenomenon has not been lost sight of. There are many references to the generation[63] of Sūrya which also show that the notion of simple luminary predominates. The connection of Sūrya with the heaven is also referred to.[64] In the *Atharvaveda* Sūrya looses that intimacy with nature which is characteristic of him in the *Rigveda.* Though there are references[65] to the rising, the mounting and the setting of Sūrya which indicate that the concept of Sūrya was still based upon the physical phenomenon; yet he becomes primarily a great force of magic and medicine in the *Atharvaveda.*[66] In the later Vedic literature the naturalistic basis of Sūrya has not been forgotten as there are references to the rising and setting of the Sun[67] and rays are too frequently referred to.[68] Sūrya is the scorching Sun.[69] The atmospheric aspect of Sūrya is maintained in the Upaniṣads.[70] In the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads the orb of the Sun is a regular object of the worship.[71] In the Sūtras[72] there are references[73] to the worship of Sūrya in the morning and the evening. They show that Sūrya continued to be the representative of the atmospheric Sun. The ceremonies like the *Sūrya-darśana,* the *Sūryanamaskāra,* the *Saṁdhyopāsanā,*[74] etc. indicate that the naturalistic concept of Sūrya continues to be the prominent one till the end of the Vedic period. But as time passes on there is more and more anthropomorphisation of his personality. But due to the constant presence of the deity in material form there is hardly any scope for the real develop of anthropomorphism in Sūrya.[75]

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[55] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 59.

[56] For details of solar features in his personality see my paper 'A New Approach to the personality of Rigvedic Indra (*J.A.H.R.S.*, vol. 31, pp. 165, 178).

[57] Bloomfield, *S.B.E.*, XLII, p. 664; Dumont, P. E., The Indic God—Aja Ekapāda, *J.A.O.S.*, vol. 53, pp. 326—34. For other views see, Macdonell, op. cit., p. 73-74.

[58] Wallis, op. cit., pp. 34-36 takes them as the representative of the rising Sun. For other views see Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 137.

[59] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 30; Keith, op. cit., p. 104.

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[60] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 30; Griswold, op. cit., p. 266; Hopkins, p. 41.

[61] VII.66.14, 15; VI. 51.1 compares the radiance of the Sun with *rukma*-disc or ornament.

[62] I.115.5–*Sūryo rūpaṁ krinute dyorūpasthe;* VIII.56.5–*divi Sūryo arocata;* VII.63.4–*Divo rukma urucakṣā udeti.*

[63] See, Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 31; *R.V.*, IX.96.5, 110.5; VI.44.23; VII.99.4; II. 12.4; III.44.2; VI .78.7.

[64] *A.V.*, IV.39. 5, 6.

[65] Ibid., I.29.5; VII.13.1.

[66] Shende, N. J., Foundations of Atharvavanic Religion, *B.D.C.R.I.*, vol. 9, pp. 222–27.

[67] *K.U.*, 2.7.

[68] *S.B.*, I.1.3.4, 6,8; I.3.1.23 & 24; II.1.3.4; VIII.7.3.19; XIII.8.1.11; *P.B.*, I.3.2., VI.7.2.

[69] S.B., II.6.3.8.

[70] Praśna U., II.9.–*Tvamantarikṣe carasi Sūryaḥ.*

Anthropomorphic Traits of Sūrya:

It would be an underestimate of the genius of the Vedic Āryans to presume that they failed to go beyond the crude material stage in the evolution of the concept of Sūrya. No doubt the idea of the luminary predominates in him yet he is a god beyond and above it. As early as the *Rigveda* anthropomorphic traits came to be attached to him. His rays were conceived sometimes as the hands of the Sun,[76] sometimes as the seven horses of the Sun's chariot on which he was driven in the firmament,[77] sometimes as the banner of the Sun.[78] He was conceived as the son of the sky and the dawn.[79] He is the lover of dawn too.[80] There is a reference to his marriage with Saraṇyū.[81]

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[71] *P.B.,* XVII.9.8, *Maitrī. U.,* I.2; *B.A.U.,* II.5.5.

[72] *S.G.S.,* II.14.8—*athādityamaṇḍale...*

[73] *A.G.S.,* III.7.4–6; *S.G.S.,* II.9.

[74] Kane, P.V., *H.D.S.,* II, pp. 31, 521.

[75] Keith, *R.P.V.U.,* p. 59.

[76] *R.V.,* I.115.5.

[77] *R.V.,* I.50.1, 8,9; I.115.3, 4; X.37.3; V.45.9; VII.60.3; IV.13.3; V.29.5.

[78] Ibid., VII.63.2—Mādhava and Sāyaṇa interpret *Ketavaḥ* as horses while Yāska takes it to mean as the rays.

[79] Ibid., X.37.1; X.189.1; VII.63.3.

[80] Ibid., I.115.2.

[81] Ibid., X.17.1, 2.

Pūṣan is said to be his messanger.[82] His path is prepared for him by Varuṇa, Mitra[83] and Aryamān.[84] His sons—Yama by Saraṇyū and the two Aśvins by Chāyā, her shadow, are mentioned.[85] He is the son of Aditi as is evident from his metronymic Āditya[86] Ādityeya.[87] He was born from the eye of the *Puruṣa*.[88] The eye of Sūrya is also mentioned.[89] He is the divine preist of the gods.[90] Since all these references are found in the Rigveda it may be safely said that Sūrya represents the personified form of the Sun also from the beginning of the Vedic period. But there is no full development of his personality due to the constant presence of the physical sun. His case exemplifies the trend of the arrested anthropomorphism so prominently found in the *Rigveda*. In the later Vedic literature tendency of personifing natural phenomena continues.

In the *Atharvaveda* he, under the name of Divākar, is said to have sprung from Vritra.[91] He is the lord of the eyes.[92] The cept of a *puruṣa* in the solar orb is directly referred to in the Upaniṣads.[93] As early as the days of Yāska[94] the scholars were aware of the question whether the Vedic gods are anthropomorphic. He replies that they may be both anthropomorphic and unanthropomorphic because unanthropomorphic appearance of the gods who are really anthropomorphic is there counter self in the form of action.

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[82] Ibid., VI.58.3.
[83] Ibid., I.24.8; VII.87.6.
[84] Ibid., VII.60.4.
[85] Ibid., X.17.1,
[86] Ibid., I.50.12, 191.9; VIII.90.11.
[87] Ibid., X.88.11;
[88] Ibid., X.90.3.
[89] Ibid., V.40.8.
[90] *R.V.*, VIII.90.12.
[91] *A.V.*, IV.10.5.
[92] Ibid., V.24.9.
[93] *C.U.*, I.6.6; *B.A.U.*, II.5.5.
[94] *N.*, VII.6.

This is applicable in the case of the Sun-god also. In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* the dawn is referred to as the wife of Sūrya.[95]

Sūrya as The Bestower of Light:

Sūrya represents primarily the light giving aspect of the Sun in the Vedic literature. In the *Rigveda* it is said that at the approach of the all-illuminating Sun the constellations depart with the night like thieves.[96] He is the source of light.[97] His departure brings the blackness of the night.[98] He shines for all world[99]—for the man and the god.[100] He dispells the darkness with his light.[101] He rolls up the darkness as a skin.[102] His rays throw off the darkness as a skin into the water.[103] In the *Taittirīya Sāṁhitā* the light-giving aspect is referred to several times.[104] He is the highest light.[105] In the *Atharvaveda* it is said that Sūrya's steeds draw the light-rolling chariot.[106] In the Brāhmaṇas also this aspect is mentioned. Here he is the lord of *viśvajyotis.*[107] He is the light of the gods.[108] the best ray of the lights,[109] the highest light.[110] In the Upaniṣads this tradition is continued except with the difference that Sūrya's light is interpreted in highest spiritual terms. It is said in the *Brihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* that the Sun may unveil the face of Brahman covered with the veil of ignorance by spreading his light.[111] In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* Sūrya is regarded as the highest light.[112] Pippalāda, a risi of the Upaniṣadic times, regarded Sūrya as the lord of light.[113]

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[95] *T.S.*, IV.3.11.

[96] *R.V.*, I.50.2.

[97] *Ibid.*, I.50.4–8—the qualifying epithet is *Vicakṣaṇaḥ* which has been interpreted by Sāyaṇa as *Sarvasya prakāsayaitaḥ*.

[98] Ibid., I.115.4,5.

[99] Ibid., VII.63.1.

[100] Ibid., I.50.5.

[101] Ibid., X.37.4.

[102] Ibid., VII.63.1.

[103] Ibid., IV.13.4.

[104] *T.S.*, I.4.31, 39.

[105] Ibid., IV.1.7.

[106] *A.V.*, XIII.1.24—*Sūryasyāśvā harayaḥ ketumantaḥ sadā bahantyamritaḥ sukhaṁ rathaṁ.*

[107] *S.B.*, VIII.7.1.15, 16, 17, 22.

[108] *S.B.*, II.4.2.1.

[109] Ibid., I.9.3.16.

[110] Ibid., XII.9.2.8.

Sūrya has been given the quality of seeing and witnessing all. A natural concommitant of this is that he is connected with the eyes. In the *Rigveda* he is far-seeing[114] and all seeing.[115] In the *Atharvaveda* also he is the beholder of all.[116] In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* the far-seeing aspect of the Sun is mentioned.[117] He gazes on all things.[118]

Sūrya as a Moral Force:

Closely connected with light-giving and all-seeing qualities of Sūrya are his ethical and moral qualities. It is said that while the earth is upheld by truth the sky is upheld by Sūrya.[119] Thus Sūrya plays the same role in the heaven which truth plays on this earth. He triumphs over beings of darkness and witches.[120] At his rising he is prayed to declare men sinless to Mitra and Varuṇa.[121] He is prayed to deliver us from heinous sin.[122] He is a witness of the good and bad deeds of men.[123] He is conceived of as making sinners guiltless.[124] In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* Sūrya has been prayed for the protection from the evil.[125] Kauṣītaki used to worship the Sun-god for the deliverance from the sin.[126] It is said that the purity of Sūrya is remarkable.[127] This aspect of Sūrya's personality has been emphasised in the Sūtra literature also where he is invoked particularly for the expiation of sin.[128]

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[111] *B.A.U.*, V.15.1—*Pūṣannekarṣe yam Sūrya prājāpatya Vyūh rasmīnsamūh tejo yatte rūpaṁ kalyāṇtamaṁ tatte paśyāmi.*

[112] *C.U.*, C.VG.G—*Udvayaṁ tamaspari jyotiḥ paśyanta uttaransvaḥ paśyanta uttaraṁ devaṁ devatrā Sūryamganm jyotiruttamamiti.*

[113] *Praśna U.*, II.9—*jyotiṣām patiḥ.*

[114] *R.V.*, VII.35.8.

[115] Ibid., I.50.2; I.50.6; VII.60.2; VII.61.1.

[116] *A.V.*, XIII.1.45.

[117] *T.S.*, I.2.9.

[118] Ibid.. IV.6.6.

[119] *R.V.*, X.85.1—*Satyenottabhitā bhumiḥ Sūryeṇottabhitā dyauḥ.*

[120] Ibid., I.191.8, 9.

Sūrya as a Healer:

Normally Sūrya is a benevolent deity in the early Vedic literature. In the *Rigveda* he is a healing power.[129] The jaundice is cured by Sūrya.[130] He is worshipped for the eye-sight also.[131] His healing power is invoked.[132] His healing aspect was developed in fuller terms in the *Atharvaveda*[133] as his role as a great physician is stressed in many rites of the *Atharvaveda*. He is called upon to remove various deseases. He is invoked to cure yellowness of eyes, skin, teeth and nails by which the jaundice may be meant as these are prominent symptoms of it.[134] As soon as Sūrya is born yellowness goes away to parrots and other yellow coloured birds or trees.[135] It has been suggested[136] that the removal of jaundice referred to in the *Rigveda* as well as in the *Atharvaveda* was based upon the principle of homeopathic magic. Similar cures for jaundice were known to ancient Greeks and Romans.[137] A few tribes of old central provinces of India resorted to similar cures in modern times also.

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[121] Ibid., VII.60.1, 62.2.

[122] Ibid., I.115.6.

[123] Ibid., VI.51.2; VII.60.1, 61.1, 63.1–4.

[124] Ibid., X.37.4, 7.

[125] *T.S.*, I.1.11.

[126] *K.U.*, II.7.

[127] *T.U.*, I.10.1.

[128] *S.G.S.*, VI.3.4–6.

[129] *R.V.*, X.37.4.

[130] Ibid., I.50.12.

[131] Ibid., X.37.7; *T.S.*, II.3.7.

[132] *T.S.*, IV.4.3.

[133] Shende, N.J., *F.A.R.*, *B.D.C.R.I.*, vol. 9, pp. 222–37; Karambelkar, A.A.A., pp. 70–73.

[134] *A.V.*, I.22; cf. *R.V.*, I.50.12.

Sūrya, as presiding over the eyes,[139] is invoked to protect them.[140] It appears as if the disinfectant power of the sunlight was known to the Atharvavedic seers as he is invoked in a charm to kill the worms.[141] In the *Rigveda*[142] he is invoked to destroy the venomous creatures and unseen insects. These worms and insects are regarded as one of the important causes of deseases in the *Atharvaveda*.[143] He is here called upon to make a remedy for the snake-bite.[144] He is also prayed for a cure of the cough.[145] He is also prayed to cure pains of different kinds[146] including of heart.[147] He is invoked to give medicine for a desease referred to as '*apacitiḥ*'.[148] Thus Sūrya in the *Atharvaveda*

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135. Ibid., I.22.4 uses the word *hāridravaṣu*. *St. Petersberg Dictionary* explains it as 'in the yellow-coloured birds', Sāyaṇa translates it as 'in the *Haritāla* trees', quoted by Griffith, op. cit., p. 240. f.n. 4.
136. Frazer, J.G., *Worship of Nature*, vol. I. p.446; *The Golden Bough*, pp. 20—21.
137. Pliny, *Historie naturalis*, XXX.11.
138. Russel, R.V., *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces* (London, 1916), IV, p. 224.
139. *A.V.*, V.1.7.
140. Ibid., II.16.2., VI.10.3.
141. Ibid., V.23.6, II.32.1.
142. R.V., I.191.8, 9.
143. Karamvelkar, *A.A.A.*, pp. 70—73.
144. *A.V.*, VI.100.1.
145. Ibid., VII.107.
146. Ibid., IX.8.
147. Ibid., IX.8.22.
148. *A.V.*, VI.83.1. Bloomfield thinks that this desease is *gaṇḍamālā*. *Vedic Index*, vol. I, p. 24.

is a great healer. In the *Brāmaṇas* also he is a healer and as such is intimately connected with the deseases of the eyes.[149] It is significant to note that there is no mention of leprosy being cured by Sūrya in the *Rigveda* and the *Atharvaveda*. The *Atharvaveda* appears to be familiir with the leprosy but it is some plant, not the Sun which is said to be the curer of the desease.[150] It became an important theme in the Purāṇic Sun-worship.[151] The origin of this trend may be traced in the Black *Yajurveda*[152] and the Brāhmaṇas.[153] They developed a belief, though not very logical, that leprosy takes place if the Sun is too much removed from them and it can be cured by a rite of twenty-one days.[154] In case a student falls ill and is unable to move he is enjoined to worship the Sun after he has risen according to the Dharmasūtras.[155] In the Sūtra period also the belief that Sūrya is a great healer was continuing.

The above review leaves no room for doubt that Sūrya has been conceived by the Āryans as a great healing power. Throughout the Vedic literature this aspect of Sūrya's personality has been maintained though its real development may be seen in the Atharvavedic tradition. It is quite understandable in view of the fact that the *Atharvaveda* is connected with the healing (*bheṣajaṁ*) aspect of Atharvans while the *Angirasa-veda* is connected with the dark (*ghoraṁ*) side of it.[156]

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[149] *P.B.*, I.3.9; *S.B.*, XIII.3.8.4.

[150] *A.V.*, I.23, 24.

[151] See, *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, Ch.139. It is said that Mayūra composed his *Sūryaśataka* in order to get cured of leprosy.

[152] *M.S.*, II.1.5, 7. 9–'*Kilāsatvād vā etasyo bhayaṁ ati hy apahanti*'.

[153] *P.B.*, XXIII.16.10.

[154] *P.B.*. XXIII.16.12 refers to a person–Ugradeva Rājani who suffered leprosy and undertook this rite, quoted by W. Caland, *P.B.*, Tr., p. 598, n.l.

[155] *B.D.S.*, II.1.1.28; cf. *T.S.*, 1.8.15.2.

[156] *A.S.S.*, X.7; *S.S.S.*, XVI.2; see, Bloomfield, M., *Hymns of the Atharvaveda*, XX-XXI, XXXVIII; Hillebrandt, A.,

It is quite natural for a healer to measure man's days[157] and prolong life.[158] He is praised for granting long life in the *Rigveda*.[159] In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* he is invoked for long life.[160] In the *Atharvaveda* too Sūrya along with many gods is invoked in various rites connected with long life.[161] He is a physician of not only physical but mental ailments also. In the *Rigveda* he is the remover of evil dreams[162] and protector from evil spirits and influences.[163] He is the bestower of peace and prosperity,[164] and the killer of enemies.[165] In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* Sūrya is invoked to protect us with prosperity.[166] He is the deity in rites specially meant for the killing of the enemies.[167] He is the rouser and vivifier of humanity.[168] Aroused by him men pursue their objects and perform their works.[169] But the fullest development of this aspect of the Sun-god may be seen in the personality of Savitṛ.[170] Sūrya as a daymaker and a healer is similar to Shamash—the Sun-god of Babylonia who is also called upon to give life to the sick-men and to vanish darkness from the house.[171]

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op. cit., vol. II, p. 160; Macdonell, A. A., *A History of Sanskrit Literature,* p. 189.

[157] *R.V.,* I.50.

[158] Ibid., VIII.48.7.

[159] Ibid., X.37.7; VII.66.16—*Paśyema śardaḥ śataṁ jīvema śardaḥ śataṁ.*

[160] *T.S.,* III.3.2.

[161] *A.V.,* II.29.1—*Āyūṣyamasma Agniḥ Sūryo.*

[162] *R.V.,* X.37.4.

[162] *R.V.,* X.37.4.

[163] *R.V.,* I.191.8, 8; X.37.3.

[164] Ibid., X.37.7, 10.

[165] Ibid., VIII.101.12, X.170.2.

[166] *T.S.,* IV.4.3.

[167] *A.V.,* II.21; IV.40; VII.13.

[168] *R.V.,* VII.63.2,3.

[169] Ibid., VII.63.4.

[170] *O.R.V.,* pp. 64-65.

[171] Jastrow, M., op. cit., p. 71.

Sūrya as a Spiritual Force:

In spite of the fact that Sūrya represents primarily the round red orb of the Sun, his concept as developed by the Vedic seers contains ideas higher than those of its material form. The Vedic seers from the very beginning were seized of the problem as to what is the power by which he travels.[172] To them he is a great spiritual force in the universe. In a hymn of the *Rigveda* he is described as the soul of all moveable and immoveable things.[173] In the *Rigveda* this phrase has been repeated only once[174] in the case of Parjanya.[175] While Sūrya has been identified with the soul of the universe, Parjanya has been said to have 'the vitality of both the fixed and the moveable' in him. Sāyaṇa interprets the word, *'atmā,* in these two verse differently. In the case of Sūrya it means, according to him, the soul of the world, the cause of all effects whether moveable or immoveable,[176] but in the case of Parjanya it means only the 'body'.[177] Mādhava, another commentator of the *Rigveda,* takes *ātmā* in the case of Sūrya as *'jīvabhūtaḥ'*,[178] while in the case of Parjanya no such interpretation is given.[179] In view of the above mentioned facts we are inclined to take this phrase as containing a characteristic feature of Sūrya in the *Rigveda.* No doubt the phrase in case of Parjanya occurs in one of the family books whose priority in date is generally accepted over the non-family books such as the first where the phrase in connection with Sūrya occurs. It is probable that the phrase as applied to Parjanya may have inspired Kutsa—the author of the hymn to Sūrya but the word has been used by Kutsa in a highly spiritual sense as opposed to the material sense in which it is employed by Vasiṣṭha—the author of the hymn to Parjanya. It may also be noted that this phrase as applied to Parjanya is an isolated instance as it is not found repeated in any of the Vedic literature[180] while in the case of Sūrya it has been repeated in most of the Vedic schools.[181] Therefore, we are inclined to believe that the Sun under the name of Sūrya was regarded as the original basis of all animate and inanimate objects of the universe in a certain Rigvedic circle represented by Kutsa of the Aṅgirasa family.

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[172] *R.V.*, IV.13.5.

[173] *R.V.*, I.115.1–*Sūrya ātmā jagatastasthusaśca.*

[174] Bloomfield, M., *Rigveda Repetitions*, pt. I, p. 121.

[175] *R.V.*, VII.101.6–*tasminnātmā jagatas tasthuṣaśca.*

[176] *īdrigbhūtamandalāntarbarto Sūryoantaryāmitayā Sarvasya prerakaḥ paramātmā jagato jañgamasya tasthuṣaḥ sthāvarasya cātmā svarūpabhūtaḥ/ Sa hi sarvasya sthāvarjañgamātmakasya kāryavargasya kāraṇaṁ...../ Sthāvarjañgamātmakasya sarvasya prāṇijātasya jīvātmā.* On *R.V.*, I.115.1 (Ed.), Max Müller, op. cit., vol. I, p. 509.

[177] *atasminna Parjanye jagato jañgamasya tasthuṣaḥ sthāvarasya cātmā deho vartate/* On *R.V.*, VII.101.6; Max Müller, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 210.

[178] Lakshman Sarup (Ed.), *Rigveda Saṁhitā*, vol. I, p. 600.

[179] Ibid., vol. IV, p. 1159.

Hopkins is convinced that this identification of the Sun with the all-spirit is distinctly a late feature.[182] This question of relative antiquity of this feature may be examined from three points of view. The first point of view is that of the time of the passage where it occurs. According to Keith[183] the hymn in question will fall in the second stage of the development, the first and the earliest being that of the family (II—VII) books. It is earlier than the third (VIII, I. 1 to 50), the fourth (IX book) and the last (Xth book) stages of the development. The second point of view is that of the antiquity of its author and his family. Kutsa—its author belongs to the Aṅgiras family—one of the oldest families of the Vedic times. The Aṅgirasas are referred to in the earliest stratum of the *Rigveda*.[184] It is suggested that they were semi-mythical beings at this stage.[185] It is also suggested that they were originally priests of the Indo-Irānian period.[186] There is a reference to Jiṣṇu-son of Aṅgiras in one of the family books[187] which shows that the earliest portions of the *Rigveda* were familiar with the Aṅgirasa family. Later there were definite families of the Aṅgirasas.[188] Thirdly, from the point of view of the similarity of thought this question may be examined. The identity of Sūrya with the universe is indicated in the *Rigveda* when it is said that he is beheld by all the same, the creator and the created.[189] In another verse he has been described as the lord of every individual moving or stationary object.[190] Here even the phraseology is similar to that used in the hymn in question with the difference that in place of *ātmā* the latter uses '*patiṁ*. In the same book Sūrya has been described as the preserver of all that is moving or stationary.[191] Since similar ideas about Sūrya are found in the family book (VII) and those too couched in a similar phraseology we are inclined to suggest that the concept of Sūrya in the Vedic literature included both the material as well as the spiritual aspects simultaneously from the earliest times and there is no reason to say that such thoughts as these expressions convey are later and forced ones on the original form of Sun-worship of simpler type. The *Rigveda* is a product of the collective thought of many seers of different intellectual levels.[192] The hymns contain high philosophical thoughts side by side the primitive and the crude material concepts.[193] The very hymn in question is an example of such features because it contains the description of the atmospheric Sun[194] and next moment he is described as the soul of the universe. From the very beginning Sūrya was regarded as the soul of the universe, and the creator and the preserver of all. This tradition initiated by Kutsa had a very long life as it is employed by almost all the Vedic schools. It is repeated in the later Vedic literature throughout.[195] It became a popular hymn in the later Vedic rituals also. In the *Dakṣiṇā* offerings this hymn is employed in the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*.[196] In the special sacrifice for becoming a successful warrior this hymn is utilized.[197] In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* it is enjoined that in the *atirātra* sacrifice in the Aśvinā *Śāstra,* Sūrya should not be passed over in recitation and the hymn along with others should be recited.[198] It is repeated in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*.[109] In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* also it is enjoined to recite this verse.[200] Here it has been understood in the sense that Sūrya is the soul of all in the universe.[201] In the Śrauta Sūtras this continues to be employed.[202] In the *utsarga* ceremony—the ceremony for the interruption of the Vedic study, the Grihyasūtras prescribe the recitation of this hymn also.[203] The above review reveals that this hymn of solar pantheism continued to be popular throughout the Vedic period. The fact that it was incorporated in almost all the schools of Vedic Saṁhitās and has been utilized by the Brāhmaṇas and the Āraṇyakas of different traditions and by the Grihya as well as the Śrauta Sūtrakāras is sufficient to show that it contained the basic idea of Sun-worship of the Vedic tradition which was nothing short of Brāhmaṇical monism.[204]

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[180] Bloomfield, M., *A Vedic Concordance*, p. 413.

[181] Ibid., p. 1025.

[182] *Religions of India* (1895 Ed.), p. 42.

[183] *R.P.V.U.*, p. 2.

[184] *R.V.*, III.31.5—10.

[185] *Vedic Index*, vol. I, p. 11.

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[186] Weber, *I.S.*, I, p. 291.

[187] *R.V.*, IV.40.1–*Aṅgirasasya Jiṣṇoḥ*.

[188] *A.V.*, XVIII.4.8,*P.B.*, XX.11.1; *T.S.*, VII.1.4.1; see, Macdonell, *V.M.*, pp. 142-43.

[189] *R.V.*, VII.62.1, *Samo divā dadrise rocomānaḥ kratvā kritaḥ sukritaḥ kartibhirabhūt*.

[190] Ibid., VII.66.16–*Śīrṣṇaḥ Śīrṣṇo jagatastasthuṣaspatiṁ*.

[191] Ibid., VII.60.2–*Viśvasya sthāturjagataśca gopā*.

[192] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, pp. 1-2.

[193] See, Chattopadhyaya, K. C., *A.I.O.C.*, vol. VIII, 1925.

[194] *R.V.*, I.115.1.–*Citraṁ devānāmudgadnīkaṁ*.

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[195] *A.V.,* XIII.2.35, XX.107.14; *A.S.,* V. 3; *V.S.,* VII. 42, XIII. 46; *T.S.,* I.4. 43–1, II.4.14.4; *M.S.,* I.3.37, 43.9; *K.S.,* 4.9, 22.5; *S.B.,* 4.3.4.10; VII.5.2.27; *T.B.,* II.8.7.4; *A.A.,* II.2.4.7, 3.2, 3.10; *T.A.,* 1.7.6, II.13.1; *N,* 12.16.

[196] *T.S.,* I.4.43.

[197] Ibid., II.4.14.

[198] *A.B.,* XVII.10.4.

[199] *T.B.,* XVIII.3.

[200] *S.B.,* VII.5.2.27.

[201] *Sūrya ātfā jagatas-tas-tasthuṣascetyesa Hyahya sarvasyātmā Yacca jagadyaśca tiṣṭhati.* Weber (Ed.), *S.B.,* p. 617.

[202] *S.S.S.,* IX.20.22; *A.S.S.,* VI.5.8.

[203] *S.G.S.,* IV.6.4.

In a few hymns of the *Rigveda* a sort of 'solar' monotheism is expressed. The Sun was conceived of as the one supreme and original god while the other gods were thought of as various names and forms of the supreme reality. It is expressly said in the *Rigveda*[205] that the learned priests call that one which is the celestial, well-winged Garutmat by many names as Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan etc. There is no direct reference to Sūrya in the hymn but the celestial bird Suparṇa Garutmān can be no other than Sūrya on following grounds. He has been expressly called a bird several times in the *Rigveda*[206] and the later Vedic literature.[207] Moreover the *Brihaddevatā*[208] (IV.42) says that Sūrya is the deity of this hymn. The *Sarvānukramaṇi*[209] also assigns this hymn to Sūrya. However, Yāska[210] thinks that this hymn is addressed to Agni. But Sāyaṇa[211] subscribes to the view of the *Brihaddevatā*. In this hymn the name of Agni and its variants are included in the list of those various names by which that one god is spoken by the learned. Therefore, that one god should be different from Agni and its variants. Sūrya is conspicuous by its absence in the list. In view of all these we are inclined to take this hymn as addressed to Sūrya. This *sūkta* tends to show that the Sun-god was regarded as the one supreme[212] god in a Rigvedic school represented by Dīrghatamas. A similar description is found in another *sūkta* of the *Rigveda*[213] where it is said that the wise seers through their praise make into many forms the bird[214] which is only one. This *sūkta* occuring in the tenth *maṇḍala* seems to have borrowed the idea of monotheism from the *sūkta* (164.46) of the first *maṇḍala*. The phraseology of this *sūkta* also appears to be a copy of the *sūkta* of the first *maṇḍala*. In view of the fact that Suparṇa has been taken to mean the Sun in the first *maṇḍala* by the commentators, there in this hymn also it may refer to the Sun. The context of the *sūkta* also indicates that the bird referred to actually means the Sun because in the previous *sūkta* (4) it is said that one of the birds has entered the firmament.[215]

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[204] Keith, A. B. (ed. & tr.) *A.A.*, p. 205, f.n.9. *A.A.* cites it as an evidence in favour of its doctrine of the identity of the self and the Sun. *Sāyaṇa* illustrates the doctrine by a quotation from the commentary of the *Brahma-sūtras*, III.3.

[205] *R.V.*, I.164.46–*Indraṁ Mitraṁ Varuṇamagnimāhu ratho divyaḥ sa Suparṇo Garutmān| Ekaṁ Sadviprā bahudhā Vadantyagniṁ yamaṁ Mātariśvānamāhuḥ.*

[206] *R.V.*, IV.40.5; V.45.9, VII.63.5; Skandasvāmin L. Sarup (Ed.), *R.V.*, vol. II, p. 342, f.n. 9 takes 'Suparṇa Garutmān' to mean Āditya. Durgā Cārya in his *commentary on the Nirukta;* L. Sarup (Ed.), p. 343, f.n.1, also takes it to mean Āditya.

[207] *A.V.*, VI.12, X.8.17, IV.20.3, XII.3.38.

[208] *Br.D.*, IV.42. *Indraṁ mitraṁ Sūryao.*

[209] Quoted by Macdonell, (Tr.), *Brihaddevatā* vol. II, p. 136.

[210] *N.*, VII.18.

[211] *Ekaiva va mahānātmā devatā sa Sūrya ityācakṣate,* Max Müller (Ed), op. cit., vol. I, p. 718.

In the Brāhmaṇas tendency to groupings increased. All the gods came to be included into three categories according to three spheres—terrestrial, atmospheric and heavenly headed by Agni, Indra and Sūrya respectively. In view of the fact that the cult of fire was of prime importance in the Brāhmaṇas therefore it was natural to believe that Agni is the supreme god. Even then there are references in the Brāhmaṇas to the supremacy of the Sun-god. It is said that Āditya is the supreme essence of the deities.[216] He is the soul of all the gods.[217] In the *Pancavimsa Brāhmaṇa* it is mentioned that Agni, Vāyu and Sūrya are the three disunited parts of Sūrya.[218] In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* too a similar idea is expressed.[219] In the Upaniṣads Sūrya is regarded as the best symbol of the ultimate reality. The Upaniṣadic seers developed the concept of the *puruṣa* in the Sun which is nothing but the formless ultimate reality while the Sun is the essence of the formed and actual reality.[220] In the *Brihad-devatā*[221] the triple division of the gods is maintained. It is said that Sūrya alone is the origin and dissolution of all moving and stationary things.

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[212] Ātmānanda cómmenting on this hymn says that it speaks of only one God *Paramātmā* which is termed variously. L. Sarup (Ed), vol. II, p. 342, f.n.3. Sāyaṇa interprets the whole hymn as containing the Vedāntik doctrine of the identity of *ātmā* and *paramātmā*. Max Müller (ed), op. cit., vol. I, p. 718. Wilson (tr.) *R.V.*, vol. II, p. 267 thinks that the text on the whole proposes the glorification of Āditya specially as identifiable with all creation.

[213] X-114.5—*Suparṇaṁ Viprāḥ Kavayo Vacobhirekaṁ santaṁ bahubhā kalpayanti.*

[214] Sāyaṇa interprets Suparṇa as *Paramātmā*. Max Müller (3d), vol. IV, p. 381. It is a derivative meaning since the bird which is the Sun has been thought of as the one supreme power.

[215] *Ekaḥ Suparṇaḥ Sa samudramā Viveśa.* cf. *A.V.*, IX.10.28.

In another hymn[222] of the *Rigveda* there is a reference to the desired identity of the worshipper and the worshipped i.e. the rays of the Sun. In a philosophic tone it says that the Sun[223] is the manifestation of the reality caused by the illusion. The seers look into the orb of the Sun as the place for the supreme. He has been called as the god among gods and the supreme light.[224] Thus the pantheistic and the monotheistic ideas have been ex-

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216. *K.B.*, XX.4.
217. *S.B.*, XIV.3.2.9.
218. *P.B.*, I.2.1
219. *T.S.*, III.1.6.
220. *B.A.U.*, II.3.1; *Maitrī U.*, VI.5.
221. *Br.D.*, I.61—*Bhavatbhūtasya bhavyasya jaṅgamsthāvarsya ca/ Asaike Sūryamevaikaṁ prabhavaṁ pralayaṁ viduḥ.*
222. *R.V.*, X.117.
223. Sāyaṇa interprets '*pataṅg*' as the Sun-*patati gacchatīti pataṅgaḥ Sūryaḥ*. Max-Müller (Ed), op. cit., vol. IV, p. 501.
224. *R.V.*, I.50.10 — *Devaṁdevatrā Suryaṁganṁ jyotiruttamaṁ*, X.170.3 — *Idaṁ Śreṣṭhaṁ* jyotiṣām *jyotiruttamaṁ.*; cf. *T.S.*, IV.1.7.

pressed in relation to Sūrya in the Vedic literature from the very beginning.

The identity of Sūrya and the universe is expressed several times in the later Vedic literature.[225] In a few hymns of the *Rigveda* theistic ideas in connection with Sūrya may be traced. For example, it is said that chiefest of our praises proceed to Sūrya. There the heart's desire of the worshipper is not disappointed where the mind is known to be attached to the pure Sun.[226] The idea of helplessness and surrender on the part of the worshipper to the Sun may be traced in another hymn.[227] They foreshadow the *ekātmikā bhakti* of later times.

Sūrya as The Time:

Sūrya has been praised as the Time also.[228] Here there are references to the twelve fellies which are the twelve months, the three axles which are the three double seasons and the three hundred sixty spokes are the days of the luno-solar year. The one wheel is the year. He as a maker of the year determines the year of 360 days.[229] In the *Atharvaveda* Sūrya is worshipped as Time.[230] In the Upaniṣads he has been identified with the year—*Saṁvatsara*.[231]

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[225] *T.S.*, II.12.1; *T.B.*, III.5.7.2; *A.V.*, VII.1.2.

[226] *R.V.*, V.44.9—*samudramāsāmava tasthe agrimā na riṣyati savanaṁ Yasminnāyatā | Atrā na hārdri krvaṇasya rejate yatrā matrividyate pūtabandhanī.* Here '*pūtaṁ*' has been interpreted by Sāyaṇa as Sūryaṁ. Max Müller (Ed), op. cit., vol. II, p. 594.

[227] *R.V.*, I.50.13 – *mo ahaṁ dviṣate radhaṁ*

[228] Ibid., I.164.48; cf. I.164.11,14.

[229] Ibid., V.81.

[230] *A.V.*, XIV.53.

[231] *B.A.U.*, I.2.7; *K.U.*, XIX.3. It is to be noted that the concept of the Sun-god as the Time was very prominent in Mithraism where Kronos was the representative of the Time.

A marked characteristic of Sūrya in the *Rigveda* is his essentially benevolent nature.[232] With the exception of a few occasions[233] there is no reference to the burning heat of Sūrya. He is a source of life in the *Rigveda*[234] but in the later Vedic literature his malevolent aspect has also been developed. The heat and rage of Sūrya became a cause of grief and death in the later Vedic literature. Sūrya is the scorching sun and is no other than the death.[235] In case of default Sūrya would burn down the sacrificers.[236] The reasons for this development may be two-fold. Firstly, the Rigvedic hymns were composed before the descent of the Āryans into the sweltering plains of northern India and hence for them the Sun was not oppressive while the later Vedic hymns were composed when the Āryan had descended into the sweltering plains of northern India where the Sun was oppressive.[237] Secondly, the early Vedic religion was essentially optimistic while the later Vedic religious thought is marked by a pessimism[238] born due to the dawn of the idea of sin in this period. This also led to the development of the malevolent side of Sūrya. However, it is the benevolent aspect of Sūrya that came to be worshipped in the Vedic rituals and ceremonies.

B. SAVITRI

Savitri is another name of the Sun-god in the Vedic literature. He represents primarily the stimulative aspect of the Sun. He is the spiritual power of the Sun and as compared to Sūrya is a more abstract deity. He is intimately connected with the sacrifices.[239] As opposed to this view Oldenberg[240] thinks that Savitri is primarily the abstract divinity of stimulation and the notion of the Sun is secondary in him. Dandekar is opposed to both these views. He propounds the theory that Savitri represents primarily another aspect of the *Asura-Varuṇa-rita* concept and belongs to the Indo-Germanic period.[241]

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[232] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 31.

[233] *R.V.*, VII.34.19, IX.107.2.

[234] Ibid., IV.54.2.

[235] *S.B.*, I.7.2.11; II.6.3.8; IX.4.2.19; *K.B.*, XVIII.9.

[236] *P.B.*, IV.6.7.

[237] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, 22-23; Barth, op. cit., 33-40.

[238] Basham, A.L., *The Wonder that was India*, p. 242.

Savitri cannot be a mere abstraction deity since there is considerable anthropomorphism in this personality as is evident from his description as golden eyed,[242] golden handed,[243] golden tongued[244] and golden hare.[245] He invests himself with a golden or tawny mail[246] an had got a chariot drawn by horses.[247] He assumes all forms.[248] In the later Vedic literature he has been specically described as a golden handed sage.[249] Moreover, the word *'Savitri'* has been used mostly as a proper name and rarely as an epithet[250] in the Vedic literature.

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[239] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 34; *J.R.A.S.*, vol. 27, pp. 951-52; Hopkins, op. cit., p. 46; Kaegi, A., *R.V.* (Tr) Arrowsmith, R., p. 57; Muir J., *O.S.T.*, vol. V., pp. 162—70; Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 106; Hillabrandt, *V.M.*, pp. 106—120; Schroeder, *L.V.*, *W.Z.K.M.*. vol. 9, p. 125; Barth, op. cit., 20; Renou, L., *Vedic India*, p. 66; Thomas, quoted by R. N. Dandekar, A.I.O.C., vol. X, pp. 10-11; Deshmukh, P. S., op. cit., p. 220; Roth, R., *P.W.*, *Z.D.M.G.*, 24, pp. 306-8 is inclined to take him as a solar god when he compares him with the Greek God—Hermes, the usherer of the day and the night.

[240] *O.R.V.*, pp. 64-65; Ragozin, op. cit., pp. 241—47 holds a similar view when he says that Savitri represents preeminently the life-giving generative force of nature as manifested chiefly but not exclusively in the action of the Sun; Griswold, op. cit., p. 277 takes him as the special god in charge of the general works of stimulation the most marked example of which is the Sun.

[241] New Light on the Vedic God Savitri, *A.I.O.C.*, Vol. X, 1940, pp. 10-11.

[242] *R.V.*, I.35.8; *V.S.*, 34.24.

[243] *R.V.*, I.22.5; I.35.9; III.54.11; VI.50.8; VI.71.4; VII.38.2; *S.V.*, I.464; *T.S.*, I.1.6; I.4.25; *A.V.*, III.21.8; VII.14.2; VII.115.2; *P.B.*, I.2.1, 19.

[244] *R.V.*, VI.71.3; *T.S.*, I.4.24; *V.S.*, 34.25; *M.G.*, 2.1.6; *K.S.*, 71.8; A few variants of it are *sujihvā* (*R.V.*, III.54.11; VII.45.4; *S.S.S.*, 8.18.1) and *mandrajihvā* (R.V., VI.71.4).

[245] X.139.1.

[246] *R.V.*, IV.53.2.—*Piśaṅgaṁ drāpiṁ.*

The main argument of Dandekar for regarding Savitri as belonging to the *Asura-Varuṇa-rita* concept is that great prominance has been given to the Savitri's hands and fingers. According to him the raising of his arms[251] contains two basic ideas associated with this concept. Firstly, he maintains cosmic order and secondly, he produces some sort of the divine magic by which he holds supreme sovereignty over the world.[252] There is no doubt that great prominence has been given to the arms and hands of Savitri as will be evident from the frequent occurrance of the epithets—*hiraṇyahasta* and *hiraṇyapāṇi* in his case. The hands and arms of Savitri are nothing but the rays of the sun. The rays of the Sun are the only weapons through which the Sun performs his various functions in the world. In one hymn of the *Rigveda* Savitri has been directly called as the solar-rayed.[253] In this context his hands are not mentioned. This is not a casual reference since this is repeated several times in the later Vedic literature.[254] This shows that the golden hands of Savitri so often referred to are simply anthropomorphised forms of the solar rays. There are references to the maintenance and regulation of the universe by him.[255] He is associated with the maintenance of the cosmic order.[256] But he himself observes the fixed laws.[257] There are references to the supreme sovereignty of Savitri over the world,[258] but there is no reference to any divine magic. There are many gods who are described as the supreme lord of the universe.[259] But they all cannot be connected with the *Asura-Varuṇa-rita* concept. The sovereignty of the universe and the maintenance of the cosmic order—these two ideas are applicable in a better way to the Sun-gods. Sūrya's overlordship of the world has been emphasised several times in the Vedic literature.[260] It is also probable that the concept of the cosmic order might have originated from the orderly movement of the Sun[261] daily. It is specifically said that Sūrya protects the law of the universe.[262] His wheel follows the unchanging, uniform universal law. The name Savitri has all the appearance of being a word of purely Indian origin and formation.[263] There is no such god of that name in the Indo-European or the Indo-Irānian period. In view of all these it is highly improbable that Savitri belongs to the *Asura-Varuṇa rita* concept and to the Indo-Germanic period.

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[247] *R.V.*, I.35.2; *V.S.*, 33.43, 34.31; *T.S.*, III.4.11.2; *M.S.*, IV.12.6; 196.17.

[248] *R.V.*, V.81.2—*Viśva rūpāṇi.*

[249] *A.V.*, VII.14.2; *S.V.*, I.464; *V.S.*, IV.25; *T.S.*, I.2.6.1; *M.S.*, 1.3.15; 14.6; *K.S.*, 2.6; *S.B.*, III.3.2.12; *A.S.S.*, IV.6.3.8; *S.S.S.*, V.9.7.

[250] Muir, J., *O.S.T.*, vol. V., p. 170. About 170 times it has been used as a proper name while only once as an attribute of Indra (*R.V.*, II.30.1) and thrice as an epithet of *Tvastṛ* (Ibid., III.55.19; X.10.5).

[251] *R.V.*, III.38.2; VI.71.15; VII.45.2.

[252] *AIOC*, vol. X, 1940, p. 10.

[253] *R.V.*, X.139.1—*Sūryaraśmirharikeśaḥ purastāt Savitā.*

[254] *V.S.*, 17.58; *T.S.*, 4.6.3.3; 5.4.6.3; *S.B.*, 9.2.3.12; *Br.D.*, 8.51.

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[255] *R.V.*, IV.53.2.—*Divo dhartā bhuvanasya prajāpatiḥ; K.B.*, XXXI-4.

[256] *R.V.*, IV.53.2—*āgandeva ritubhirabardhatu Kṣayaṁ.*

[257] Ibid., IV. 53.4—*dhritbrato maho ajmasya rājati;* Griswold, op. cit., p. 270.

[258] *R.V.*, V.81.5—*utedaṁ viśvaṁbhuvanaṁ virājasi;* V.82.2—*na minanti Svarājyaṁ.* cf. *Ap. S.S.*, 6.22.

[259] *R.V.*, VIII.93.11, III.46.2; I.101.5; II.33.9; I.115.1; Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 24.

[260] *R.V.*, I.115.1.

[261] See, Apte, V.M., Ritam in the Rigveda, *A.B.O.R.I.*, XXIII. pp. 55—60.

[262] *R.V.*, X.37.5—*Viśvasya hi presito rakṣasi Vratamhelayannu ccarasi svadhā anu.*

[263] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 34.

Solar Theory of Savitri's Orignail Nature:

That Savitri is a solar deity in the Vedic literature is indicated by his features and activities. In several passages Savitri and Sūrya are spoken of indisciminately to denote the same deity.[264] Thus it is said in the *Rigveda* that God Savitri has raised aloft his brilliance making light for the whole world; Sūrya shining brightly has filled the heaven, earth and air with his rays.[265] In another hymn[266] Sūrya is spoken of in terms (derivatives of the root '*Sū*') usually applied to Savitri and in the third verse of the same hymn. Savitri is mentioned as the same god. At another place[267] Sūrya is employed as synonymous with Savitri. In other hymns[268] also it is hardly possible to keep the two deities apart. In the *Śrauta* sacrifices and the *Grihya* ceremonies Savitri is employed as the Sun-god.

Savitri and Sūrya Distinguished:

In some passages Savitri is however distinguished from Sūrya. It is said that Savitri impells Sūrya.[269] He is again distinguished from Sūrya when it is said that he declares men sinless to Sūrya.[270] Further, it is said that he shines with the rays of Sūrya.[271] Sūrya has been said to impart energy into him.[272] Sāyaṇa admits that this distinction is due to their two different forms and not due to the difference in the divinity which is the same.[273]

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[264] Muir, J., *O.S.T.*, vol. V.; Macdonell, op. cit., p. 33.

[265] *R.V.*, IV.14.2.

[266] Ibid., VII.63.1, 2, 4.

[267] Ibid., I.35.7.

[268] Ibid., X.158.1–5; I.35.1–11, 124.1.

[269] Ibid., I.35.9.

[270] Ibid., I.123.3.

[271] Ibid., V.81.4; *T.S.*, 1.5; IV.6.3; 1.1.10; I.1.2.

[272] Ibid., VII.45.2.

[273] *Yadyapi Savitri Sūryayorekadevatātattvam tathāpi mūrtibhedena gantrigantavyabhāvaḥ*, Max Müller (Ed.), *R.V.*, p. 190; Skandasvāmī L. Sarup, op. cit., vol. II, p. 175, f.n.13

With Mitra, Aryamān and Bhaga Savitri is invoked to vivify the worshipper where Sūrya has risen.[274] At many other places they are mentioned separately.[275] The distinction is due to the fact that they represent different aspects of the Sun. While Sūrya represents the round red orb of the Sun primarily, Savitri is the personification of the stimulative aspect of the Sun. The distinction is no ground for saying that Savitri is not a solar deity. The worship of the different aspects of the Sun under different names is true not only for India but for many other countries in ancient times. In another verse we are reminded of the morning hours when many deities of solar nature such as Aśvins, Uṣā, Sūrya, Savitri, etc. become busy in performing their respective duties. If Savitri is invested with the rays of the Sun it is quite natural as though the body of the spiritual self is made of the rays of the Sun.

In the Brāhmaṇas Savitri is directly identified with the Sun.[276] A reddish white bullock is the fee for invocation to Savitri because the Sun is reddish white in the rising and the setting.[277] In the Upaniṣads[278] the worship of the Sun by means of the prayers to Savitri is prescribed.

Savitri as the Divinity of Light:

That the original nature of Savitri is based upon the Sun is indicated by the fact that he has been given the

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interprets that as Savitri goes to the Sun who is at the *astācal* mountain; Griswold, op. cit., p. 292 explains it by saying that Savitri is in charge of the Sun during the interval between evening and morning and as such is the power that impells the Sun from the place of his setting to the place of his rising. cf., Bergaigne, A., op. cit., III.56; Wallis, H. W., *The Cosmology of the Rigveda*, p. 115; See, *A.B.*, III.44.

[274] *R.V.*, VII.66.4

[275] Ibid., X.181.3, I.157.1.

[276] *S.B.*, III.2.3.11, 18; V.3.1.7.

[277] Ibid., V.3.1.7.

[278] *Maitrī U.*, VI.7.

power to disperse darkness from the world.[279] At another place[280] he has been invoked as the Sun coming after Uṣā. It is said that Savitri has illumined the heaven and shines in sequence to the passage of the dawn.[281] Savitri rises regularly at the close of the night.[282] He diffuses light over the spacious earth and the heaven.[283] His solar nature is quite apparent when it is said that he sends the undying light from the east[284] and illumines every corner of three regions.[285] In view of such descriptions there can be no doubt that Savitri is a divinity of the light and the day. His functions start after the end of night and finishes with the coming of the evening. It is significant to note that at one place in the *Rigveda* Varuṇa as the god of the night has been contrasted with Savitri.[286] Like Sūrya, Savitri is preeminently a golden-deity.[287] In the later Vedic literature his solar nature is sometimes clearly indicated. For example, he is said to bring light.[288] His connection with the year is also indicative of his solar nature.[289] In the *Atharvaveda* also it is said that his light shines brilliant in the sky.[290] In the Brāhmaṇas[291] also he is connected with the light.

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[279] *R.V.*, I.35.4—*Kriṣṇā rajānsi taviṣīṁ dadhānaḥ* 7.9; II.38.3—*anu vrataṁ Saviturmokyāgāt;* II.38.6,8; IV.53.3—*Āprā rajānsi divyāni pārthivā ślokaṁ devaḥ kriṇute svayāy dharmaṇe/ prabāhū asrāk-Savitā savīmani nivveśyan prasuvannaktubhirjagat.*

[280] *R.V.*, I.113.1.

[281] Ibid., V.81.2—*vi nākamakhyat Savitā vareṇyo anu prayāṇamuṣaso vi rājati.*

[282] VI.71.4—*uduṣya devaḥ savitā damūnā hiraṇyapāṇiḥ pratidoṣamasthat.*

[283] Ibid., VII.38.1, 2.

[284] Ibid., X.139.1; *Sūrya raśmir harikeśaḥ purastāt Savitā jyotirudayāṁ ajasraṁ*

[285] Ibid., X.139.2.

[286] Ibid., I.35.1.

[287] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 105; Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 32; Muir, *O.S.T.*, vol, V., p. 163.

[288] *T.S.*, I.2.3, 1.2.6, IV.1.1; IV.6.3.

[289] Ibid., IV.4.12.

Savitri's Association with Solar Deities:

The relation of Savitri to Pūṣan, Bhaga and Mitra is also indicative of his solar background. Savitri by his movements becomes Pūṣan.[292] Savitri becomes Mitra by reason of his laws.[293] Savitri has been identified with Bhaga.[294] They seem to be connected with each other.[295] Since they are solar deities Savitri's identification with them shows his solar nature.

Yāska[296] expressly says that the Sun is called Savitri also and he quotes *hiraṇyastūpa* hymn as an evidence in favour of his thesis.

Thus the functions and attributes coupled with the origin of his name favour the solar origin of Savirti. He is a creation of the Indo-Āryans. His concept differs from that of Sūrya in the sense that he is the spiritual self of the Sun and is particularly in charge of its stimulating activities while Sūrya is representative of the concrete body of the Sun and is primarily responsible for the removal of darkness and the diffusion of light. No doubt Sūrya has been prayed sometimes as the vivifier and arouser of the mankind,[297] but the works of impulsion, vivification, instigation and stimulation are characteristically attributed to Savitri. He is the lord of stimulation par-excellance. In the *Rigveda* he is the enlightener of men.[298] His office is that of the gene-

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290. *A.V.*, VII.14.2.
291. *S.B.*, III.3.2.12.
292. *R.V.*, V.81.5–*Pūṣā bhavasi deva yāmabhiḥ*; cf. III.62.9.
293. Ibid., V.81.4–*Mitrobhavasi deva dharambhiḥ*.
294. Ibid., V.82.3.
295. Ibid., VII.38, 1, 6
296. *N.*, X.32–*Ādityoapi Savitocyate / tathā ca hiraṇyastupe stutaḥ //*
297. *R.V.*, VII.63.2.3.
298. Ibid., I.22.7.

ration of mankind.[299] He is the stimulator of our thought.[300] The word *'Savitri'* has been derived from the root *Sū* or *Su* which has three principal significations: (i) to generate or to bring forth, (ii) to pour forth a libation, (iii) to impel or send. Sāyaṇa[301] takes the root as applied to Savitri in two senses—'of impelling or authorising' though in a few passages[302] it means 'to beget'. Mostly the derivates of this root as applied to Savitri and Sūrya are used in the sense of impelling or stimulating. Yāska[303] defines the word Savitri as *sarvasya-prasavitā* but he does not explain the sense in which *prasavitā* is to be taken, but it is generally taken to mean as the stimulator of all.[304] In the *Taittirīya Śaṁhitā*[305] he is often invoked for the impulsion. In the *Atharvaveda*[306] he has been described as the lord of stimulation. In many Śrauta sacrifices he has been prayed for instigation[307] as he is the lord of instigation.[308] From the innumerable references to his power of stimulation it is clear that in the Brāhmaṇas this quality of Savitri has been given too much emphasis. In the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads[309] this aspect of impulsion has been given a philosophic turn. In the Śrauta and the Grihya Sūtras[310] the impulse of the god is mentioned too often.

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[299] *R.V.*, II.38.1, VII.45.1.

[300] Ibid., III.62.10.

[301] Muir, *O.S.T.*, vol. V., p. 165.

[302] *R.V.*, I.113.1.

[303] *N.*, X.31.

[304] Sarup, L. (Tr), *Nirukta*, p. 164.

[305] *T.S.*, I.1.1; I.1.4; I.1.6; I.2.6; I.7.7; IV.1.1; IV.1.3.

[306] V.24.1—*Savitā prasavānām adhipatiḥ sa māvatu.*

[307] *A.B.*, I.8; VIII.7; *K.B.*, IV.14; VIII.1, 3; *P.B.*, I.8.1; XVI.5, 6; XXIV.15.2, 3; *S.B.*, III. 5.3.10, 12; III.5.4.4; III.6.3.15; III.7.1.1; III.8.4.13; III.9.1.20; III.9.3.14; V.6.6. 6, 7; V.1.5.4; V.2.4.17; V.3.1.7; V.3.5.8; V.4.4.9; V.4.5.2; V.5.4.30; VI.5.4.11; VI.6.1.21; IX.3.4.17; X.2.6.2; XII.8. 3.29; XIV.1.3.6.

[308] *A.B.*, I.16; I.30.

[309] *Svet.U.*, II.1.

[310] *S.G.S.*, I.8.21, II.2.21; *A.G.S.*, I.20.4; I.24.15; *G.G.S.*, II.10.26; *P.G.S.*, I.3.17; I.6.2; *H.G.S.*, I.1.2.10, I.2.5, 11; I.27.1; *Ap.G.S.*, I.2.3; *K.G.S.*, I.2.20; *S.S.S.*, I.4.4, 5.

Thus throughout the Vedic literature he is connected with the works of stimulation, impulsion and instigation. Other works such as the bestowing of riches and the purification are not so characteristically attributed to him. Therefore it is reasonable to suppose that Savitri is the personification of the stimulating aspect of the Sun.

However, Savitri has been connected with other works such as bestowing of riches and purification of sin and protection from the evil also. Of course, these activities of Savitri are secondary to him. In the *Rigveda*[311] he has been invoked for protection and preservation several times. He is the despenser of various home-insuring wealth[312] and giver of riches.[313] He is the remover of sin and bestower of purity.[314] He is connected with the fertility of the earth.[315] He has been asked to drive away evil dreams and all misfortunes.[316] In the *Atharvaveda* he along with Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryamān is invoked in charms to avert evil spirits of misfortune and secure prosperity.[317] His connection with the wealth is also continued in the *Atharvaveda*.[318] In the later Vedic literature these two features of purification[319] and bestowing of riches[320] continue to be associated to him. In the Sūtras Savitri is invoked for purification but here also these features remain subservient to his main work of stimulation.

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[311] *R.V.*, I.22.5, 6; I.35.1; I.35.11; II.38.2, II.38.10, 11; IV.53.1; VI.71.3; VII.38.3, 6.

[312] Ibid., I.22.7.

[313] Ibid., I.22.8, I.35.8; II.38.1, II.38.10; III.62.11; V.82.4; VI.71.4, 6; VII.45.3, 4; X.35.7; X.36.13; X.139.3.

[314] Ibid., I.35.3.

[315] Ibid., IV.54.4; *A.V.*, V.26.12.

[316] Ibid., V.82.4, 5.

[317] *A.V.*, I.18.2; I.26.2.

[318] Ibid., I.26.2; II.29.2; VII.14.3; VII.175.2.

[319] *T.S.*, I.1.5; I.2.1; IV.1.11.

[320] Ibid., I.4.23, 24; II.4.12; *S.B.*, V.1.1.14.

Savitri and Sacrifices:

There is an intimate connection between Savitri and sacrifices in tht Vedic tradition. It is this intimacy which has led many scholars to believe that he is primarily a god of sacrifices. He is the presiding deity of the sacrifice.[321] Most of the hymns composed for him are to accompany the sacrifices either of morning or evening.[322]

Gāyatrī Hymn:

Savitri is connected with wisdom and intelligence.[323] He is the divine object of meditation.[324] In a few domestic rites he is invoked for instilling intelligence. The famous Gāyatrī hymn[325] contains the belief that the solar light is the symbol of ultimate knowledge and reality. At what stage this meaning came to be attached to this god is not definitely known. This is an off-quoted hymn of the Vedic literature. It is repeated in many Saṁhitās.[326] It is significant to note that it does not figure in the *Atharvaveda*. The Brāhmaṇas[327] enjoin the employment of this hymn in many rituals. The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*[328] of the Atharvavedic tradition also utilizes it. In the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads[329] it is interpreted in the highest metaphysical sense. In the Sūtra literature[330] also it is quoted.

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[321] Renou, L., op. cit., p. 66.

[322] Hopkins, *R.I.*, p. 46; Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 34.

[323] *R.V.*, III.62.12; V.81.1, 2; II.38.10.

[324] Ibid., II.38.10; V.82.8.

[325] Ibid., III. 62.10.

[326] *S.V.*, 2.81.2; *V.S.*, 3.35, 22.9, 30.2, 36.3; *T.S.*, 1.5.6.4, 8.4, 4.1.11.1; *M.S.*, 4.10.3, 149.14.

[327] *A.B.*, 4.32.2, 5, 6, 13.8, 19.8; *K.B.*, 23.3, 26.10; *S.B.*, 2.3.4, 39; 13.6.2.9; 14.9.3.11; *D.B.*, 3.25.

[328] *G.B.*, 1.1.34.

[329] *T.A.*, 1.11.2, 10.27.1; *B.A.U.*, 6.3.11; *Mah.U.* 15.2; *M.U.*, 6.7.34; *J.U.B.*, 4.28.1; *Svet. U.*, 4.18.

[330] *A.S.S.*, 7.6.6, 8.1.18; *S.S.S.*, 2.10.2, 12.7; 5.5.2; 10.6.17; 9.16; *Ap.S.S.*, 6.18.1; *M.S.S.* 5.2.4.43; *S.G.S.*, 2.5.12; 7.19; 6.4.8; *Kaus.*, 91.6; *Kh.G.S.*, 2.4.21; *S.M.B.*, 1.6.29; *Ap.G.S.*, 4.10.9—12; *Ap.M.B.*, 2.4.13; *B.D.S.*, 2.10.17.14.

The *pratīkas* of the hymn are quoted in many more works of the Vedic tradition.[331] Thus the Gāyatrī became the summum bonum of life of every devout Hindu. What is the secret of its immense popularity? Whitney failed to find any good reason for its fame and popularity.[332] Hopkins[333] suggests that the longed-for glory was interpreted later on as a revealed indication of primitive pantheism and the verse was understood to express the desire of absorption into the Sun which was one of the first divine bodies to be accepted as the type of the All-god. Griswold[334] thinks that Savitri's power of stimulation is transferred to the spiritual world and he becomes the inspirer and quickenor of thought. Let us see the traditional interpretation of this hymn. Sāyaṇa,[335] while commenting on it in the *Rigveda,* interprets it in the highest metaphysical sense. According to him it means: 'we meditate on the light which is one with Brahma; his own light which from its consuming influence on ignorance and its consequences is termed *bhargas* and is that which is desirable, from its being to be known or worshipped by all (the property of the supreme being, the creator of the world and the animator through the abiding spirit of all creatures). He suggests various meanings also. *Bhargas* may be interpreted as sphere or orb of light, the consumer of sins (*bhargaḥ pāpānāṁ tāpkaṁ tejomaṇḍalaṁ*) or as food (*bhargaḥsabdenānnāmabhidhīyate*). The phrase '*devasya Savituḥ*' may mean 'of the bright or radiant Sun' (*Savituḥ sarvasya prasaviturdevasya dyotamānasya sūryasya*). Thus the prayer may simply mean an invocation to the Sun for his favour to provide food and the like for sustenance. Mādhava[336] takes *bhargas* to mean *teja*. Mahīdhara commenting on the same text in the *Yajurveda* takes the verse as containing a similar thought i.e. the identity of the soul and Brahma but he notices similar varieties of interpretation. *Bhargas* has been interpreted as orb, man and rays of the Sun.[337] Bhaṭṭabhāskara Miśra[338] commenting on it in the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* takes *bhargas* to mean splendour, food and riches. Mahīdhara interprets *Savituḥ* as the man in the Sun or the Brahma.[339] Uvvata dittos this interpretation.[340] Guṇaviṣṇu takes it to mean as a prayer to the Brahma for soul's absorption in him.[341] In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[342] the text says that Savitri inspires and flurishes all acts. In the Upaniṣads[343] it became a source for realisation of ultimate reality. Śaṅkara takes it in a pure Vedāntic sense.[344] In the Grihyasūtras the Gāyatrī is a symbol of all Vedic knowledge. It is the essence of supreme knowledge. That is why the Vedic study starts with its recitation. Rudraskanda commenting on it[345] says that it is the soul and essence of all knowledge. Nārāyaṇa comments on it[346] in a similar sense. If the commentators are to be believed, the Gāyatrī hymn contains the highest metaphysical thought. It demonstrates the concept of an idealistic monism. Whether this meaning was attached to it from its very birth in the *Rigveda* or it was given to it in the later Vedic period that cannot be definitely known. In view of the fact that the Sun has been regarded as the soul of all moveable and immoveable things in this universe in the *Rigveda* it is no surprise if this high metaphysical meaning may have been in the mind of the author of the hymn. The concept of *hiraṇyagarbha* in the *Rigveda* shows that the Sunball was taken to be the symbol of ultimate reality. In the Upaniṣads this concept of a *puruṣa* in the Sun becomes very prominent. Therefore it is definite that by the time of the later Vedic literature the Gāyatrī hymn was definitely understood to contain the thought of the idealistic monism, and it is quite probable that it had a philosophical meaning from the very beginning. Thus the Gāyatrī demonstrates, to quote Jones, 'the supremacy of that divine Sun, the godhead, who illuminates all, who recreates all, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, whom we invoke, to direct our understandings aright in our progress towards his holy seat.'[347]

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[331] *Rvidh.*, 1.12.5; *M.S.S.*, 5.2.4.43.

[332] Colebrooks, *Misc. Essays,* Ed. E. B. Cowell, p. 127.

[333] Hopkins, E. W., *R.I.*, p. 47.

[334] op. cit., p. 278.

[335] Max Müller, op. cit., vol. II, p. 338–*Yaḥ Savitā devo nosmākaṁ dhiyaḥ karmāṇi dharṁādiviṣayā vā buddhīḥ pracodayāt prerayet tattasya devasya Savituḥ sarvāntaryāmitayā prerakasya jagatsrasṭuḥ parmeśvarsya vareṇyaṁ Sarvairūpāsyatayā jñyeytayā ca saṁbhajanīyaṁ bhargo avidyātat kāryayorbhajnādbhargaḥ svayaṁ jyotiḥ parabrahmātkaṁ tejo dhīmahi vayaṁ dhyāyāmaḥ.*

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[336] Sarup (Tr.), *R.V.*, vol. III, p. 752.

[337] Ibid., p. 753—*Sarvapānāṁ Sarva sansārasya ca bharjansamarthaṁ tejaḥ satyajñānān andādivedānta pratipādyaṁ/ Yadvā maṅḍalaṁ puruṣo raśmayaḥ iti trayaṁ bhargaḥ Sabdavācyaṁ bhargo vīryaṁ vā.* Uvvaṭa also takes *bhargas* to mean vitality, splendour and light—*bhargaḥ sabdovīrya vacanaḥ...athavā bhargastejovacanaḥ/ Yadvā maṅdalaṁ puruṣo raśmayaḥ ityetat tritatayamabhipreyate.*

[338] Ibid.—*Bhargastejonnaṁ dhanaṁ vā.*

[339] Ibid.—*Prerakasyantaryāmino vijñānānanda svabhāvasya hiraṇyagarbhopādhyavaochinnasya Vāādityāntara Puruṣasya vā Brahmaṇaḥ.*

[340] Ibid.—*Sarvasya prasavadātuḥ/ Ādityāntarapuruṣasya devasya hiraṇyagarbho padhya vacchinnasya vā vijñānānanda svabhāvasya vā Brahmaṇaḥ.*

[341] *Chāndogyamantrabhāṣya* 5.4, pp. 86—89—*atmanyeva Brahmajyotiṣā saḥ Ekabhāvaṁ Karotu.*

[342] *S.B.*, II.3.4.39; *Savitriprasūtā eva sarve kāmāḥ Samridhayante.*

[343] *Svet.U.*, 4.18.

[344] *Tadakṣaraṁ taduktasvarūpaṁ na Kṣarati ityakṣaraṁ ṇityaṁ tattatpadalakṣyaṁ Savituradityamanḍalābhi mānino vareṇyaṁ saṁbhajnīyaṁ.*

Besides the Gāyatrī hymn there are other descriptions in the *Rigveda* itself which associate Savitri with the highest metaphysical ideas. He is the ruler of the world.[348] Savitri has been invoked as the supreme god, the creator and the preserver[349] and the regulator of all moveable and immoveable.[350] All is comprehended in him and he comprehends all.[351] No god has power to prevent him from his work.[352] He is all god and he is all universe. He is praised by all the gods.[353] Thus pantheistic, monotheistic and monistic ideas have been associated with him.

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[345] *Kh.G.S.*, II.4.21—*Api ca sarvadedātmakatvaṁ sarvasāratvaṁ ca Sāvitryādīnāṁ śṛuti smritiṣu śrūyata eva*, p. 75.

[346] *S.G.S.*, II.7.19—*Gāyatrīmātre prayukte sarvasya vedasya raśeretanmayatvāt sarvajñānaṁ bhavatityabhiprāyaḥ.*

[347] Jones, W., *Works*. No. 2, vol. XIII, p. 367.

[348] *R.V.*, IV.54.4; V.81.5.

[349] Ibid., IV.53.2—*Divodhartā bhuvanasya prajāpatiḥ.* It is not repeated for any other god in the *Rigveda; K.B.*, 21.4; *A.V.*, 5.3.9—*dhātāvidhātābhuvansya.*

The phrase *'Viśvārūpāṇi prati muñcate kaviḥ'* is repeated for Savitri throughout the Vedic literature.[354] The epithets *Prajāpati* and *Viśvarūpa* applied to Savitri show the supremacy of Savitri. In the Upaniṣads Savitri has been symbolically identified with the ultimate reality.[355] These descriptions of him were later on utilized by the sectarians in the development of the sect of the Sun.

C. MITRA

Various Views on Mitra's Nature:

The Sun was worshipped under the name of Mitra also in the Vedic period. The majority of scholars takes him to be the representative of the beneficient aspect of the Sun.[356] Slightly different to this is the view that originally he like his Irānian counterpart was the personification of the celestial light rather than of the Sun though in later times like Mithra he came to be identified with the Sun.[357] A third view about him is that he was originally a 'sondergott'—'he of the compact' whose business was to preside over the social principle of faithfulness to contracts.[358]

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[350] *R.V.*, IV.53.6.

[351] Ibid., IV.53.5; V.81.2–*Viśvārūpāṇi pratimuñcate kaviḥ.*

[352] Ibid., II.38.7, III.82.2.

[353] Ibid., VII.38.3, 4.

[354] *V.S.*. 12.3; *T.S.*, IV.1.10.4; *M.S.*, 2.7.8, 84.14, 3.2.1; 14.15; *K.S.*, 16.8; *A.B.*, 1.29.14; *K.B.*, IX.3; *S.B.*, 6.7.2.4; *A.S.S.*, 9.5; *N.* 12.13.

[355] *C.U.*, 3.12.

[356] Roth, R., *Z.D.M.G.*, vol. VI, p. 60; Muir, J., *O.S.T.*, vol. V., pp. 69–71; Hopkins, op. cit., p. 71; Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 30; Ragozin, op. cit. p. 149; Frazer, J. G., *Worship of Nature*, vol. I, p. 450; Winternitz, *H.I.L.*, p. 76; Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 98; Renou, op. cit., p. 60; Ghate, *Lectures on the Rigveda*, p. 145; Apte, V.M., *The Vedic Age*, Ed. R. C. Majumdar, p. 368.

Mitra of the Veda is identical with Mithra of the Indo-Irānian religion.[359] He dates from a period before the separation of the Indian and the Irānian peoples as is evidenced by the occurrence of his name in the list of gods on the Boghazkoi tablets.[360] His association with Varuṇa is so predominant in the *Rigveda* that he has virtually lost his independence of character and there is only one single hymn (III.59) of the *Rigveda* which is exclusively devoted to him while jointly with Varuṇa he is invoked in several hymns. In the later Vedic literature he attains independence in the sense that he becomes a sort of antithesis of Varuṇa. The original nature of Mitra may be known from these three sources.

Testimony of Indo-Irānian Religion:

The Indo-Irānian Mithra was definitely a Sun-god.[361] It is said in the *Avesta*[362] that 'Mithra is the spiritual Yazata, who first rises over the Alburz mountain before the immortal Sun, driver of swift horse, who foremost attains the gold-decked, fair-summits, whence he surveys the whole dwelling plan of the Āryas'. In the Pahlavi work *Dadestān-e-Dīnī*[363] the word Mithra is used for the Sun himself. The Zoroastrians worship Mithra as the Sun.[364] According to the *Avesta* Mithra gives light just as the moon does.[365] Being the god of light Mithra is watchful with his ten-thousand eyes.[366] Like the Sun-god Mithra drives in a car of one golden wheel which has four horses with golden and silver boots.[367]

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[357] Spiegel, F., *Eranische Atterthumskunda*, ii, 77; Barth, op. cit., p. 19; Dramesteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman*. pp. 62. 72.

[358] *O.R.V.*, p. 186; Meillet, *J.A.*, vol. X, 1901-2, p. 145; Shroeder, L. V., op. cit., pp. 367—83; Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 151; Griswold, H. D., op. cit., p. 116; Davoud, P. Mithra Cult, *J.B.O.R.S.*, 1933, vol. XIX, pp. 255—80.

[359] Hodivala, S. K., *Indo-Irānian Religion*, pp. 47—52. cf. Windischmann, F., *Mithra*, Leipzig, 1859.

[360] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 5, f.n. 1, 2.

[361] Spiegel, F., *Die Arische Periode*, 183; *O.R.V.*, 48, 190; Eggers, A., *Der Arische Gott Mitra*, pp. 6—13.

[362] *Yt.*, X.13.

[363] 30, 14.

Evidence of the Rigveda:

In the *Rigveda* many similar descriptions of Mitra may be traced. Mitra and Varuṇa give light like the moon.[368] He watches men with the unwinking eyes.[369] Sūrya also is the beholder of all,[370] Mitra and Varuṇa are said to mount on a golden car.[371] The golden car is nothing but the Sun. According to the *Rigveda* the Sun is the brilliant chariot in the sky.[372] Savitri–the Sun-god of stimulation, is once identified with Mitra.[373] The association of the chariot with the Sun-god–Sūrya is well known. Agni who goes at the head of the dawn produces Mitra for himself.[374] Agni when kindled is Mitra.[375] This identification of Agni with Mitra shows the solar nature of Mitra because Agni was considered in the Vedic tradition as the earthly form of the Sun. Viṣṇu, another solar god, is said to take his three steps by the laws of Mitra.[736] As pointed by Macdonell[377] the bringing of men together[378] is a distinctive feature of Mitra in the Vedic literature. Similarly it is said of Savitri that he causes all creature to hear him.[379] Mitra is spoken of as the Āditya which is a popular name of the Sun--god in later times . In the *Rigveda* itself Sūrya has been called as an Āditya.[380] Like Sūrya[381] he is the supporter of the heaven and the earth.[382] He transcends the sky and the earth.[383] It is only the Sun which traverses the heaven and the earth. These descriptions of Mitra in the *Rigveda* indicate his solar basis. Sūrya has been described as the eye of Mitra and Varuṇa in the Vedic literature.[384] It should not be taken as an evidence of any antithesis between Mitra and Sūrya. This difference may be due to difference in the functions of the Sungods or due to difference between the god and the natural substratum. Moreover, Mitra may have obtained, in association with Varuṇa, a description which strictly applied to his partner.[385]

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[364] Hodivala, op. cit., p. 49.

[365] *Mithra Yt.*, 142.

[366] Ibid., 141.

[367] Ibid., 136, 143, 145.

[368] *R.V.*, III.61.7.–*Mahī mitrasyo varuṇasya māyā candreva bhānuṁ vi dadhe purutrā.*

[369] Ibid., III.59.1–*Mitraḥ Kristīrnimiṣābhi caṣte*; T.S., 3.4.11.5; *K.S.*, 23.12; 35.19; *T.B.*, 3.7.2.4; *Ap.S.S.*, 9.2.6; *M.S.S.*, 3.2.8.

[370] *R.V.*, I.50.6.

[371] Ibid., V.62.8; 63.1.

[372] Ibid., V.63.7–*Riten Viśvaṁ bhuvanaṁ vi rājathaḥ Sūryamā dhattho divi citryaṁrathaṁ.*

[373] Ibid., V.81.4–*Mitrobhavasi deva dharmabhiḥ.*

[374] Ibid., X.8.4–*Janayan mitraṁ tanve Svāyai.*

[375] Ibid., III.5.4; V.3.1.

Evidence of Later Vedic Literature:

In the later Vedic literature Mitra's solar nature has been directly expressed. In the *Atharvaveda* Mitra at sun-

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[376] *Vāl.* 4.3.

[377] *V.M.*, p. 29.

[378] *R.V.*, III.59.1; *Mitro janān yātayati bruvāṇo;* VII.36.2; V.72.2; I.136.3; VIII.91.12. It is repeated in *T.S.*, 3.4.11.5; *K.S.*, 23.12; 35.19; *A.S.S.*, 3.11.22; *Ap.S.S.*, 6.26.7; *M.S.S.*, 3.2.8.

[379] *R.V.*, V.82.9.

[380] Ibid., I.50.13.

[381] Ibid., X.85.1.

[382] Ibid., III.59.1—*Mitro dādhār prithvīmuta dyām.*

[383] Ibid., III.59.7.

[384] Ibid., I.115.1; VI.51.1; VII.61.1; 63.1; X.37.1; *T.S.*, I.4.43; II.4.14.

[385] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 98.

rise is contrasted with Varuṇa in the evening.[386] It is said that Mitra uncovers in the morning what has been covered up by Varuṇa.[387] He arranges the seasons and spreads his splendour over the earth.[388] In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*[389] Mitra's solar nature is expressed when it is said that Mitra united the earth and the ground with light. In the later Vedic literature it is directly said that Mitra is the god of the day and Varuṇa of night.[390] This is the prevailing view of the Brāhmaṇas. He is connected with the light in the Brāhmaṇas.[391] That Mitra and Varuṇa are the gods of day and night respectively, is also indicated by the practice of giving a white and a dark victim to them respectively at the sacrificial post mentioned in the ritual literature.[392] Ancient Indian commentators[393] are of the view that Mitra is the presiding deity of the day.

Mitra as the Friendly Sun-God:

On the above grounds we are inclined to take Mitra as the Sun-god in his friendly aspect. He is the dearest friend of the people.[394] It is derived from the root √Mit = to love. Mitra is essentially a kindly god and his name Mitra in the sense of a friend has been frequently punned upon in the *Rigveda*.[395] In the later Vedic literature his friendly nature is maintained.[396] Yāska[397] gives three alternative etymologies—Mitra is so called because he preserves (*trāyate*) from destruction (Pra-mī-ti) or because he runs (*dravati*) measuring things together $(\sqrt{mi})$ or the word is derived from the causal of the verb '*mid*' (to be fat) because fat oblations are offered to him. Oldenberg thinks that the use of the word arises from the name of the god who was a god of compacts.[398] In view of the internal evidence of the *Rigveda* where he is called the dearest friend of the people it may be suggested that Mitra on account of his favour, protection and gift of food and happiness denotes primarily a friend. The idea of faithfulness to contracts must have been derived from this original meaning Mitra rarely becomes angry. It is only when the commandment of Varuṇa is broken that he becomes angry.[399] The idea of faithfulness to contracts must have been derived from this original meaning. In the *Rigveda*[400] itself there is no mention of his connection with the contracts. It is only in the later Vedic literature that he is a god of concord and agreement.[401] Thus Mitra is essentially a benevolent god. Those who follow his command and worship him by means of the fat oblations on the sacred grass,[402] are well protected by him.[403] His worshippers are free from the sin and desease.[404] The worship of Mitra in the *Rigveda* appear to have been on the Irānian pattern. This worship is connected with fire.[405] It appears that the friendly nature of Mitra was based upon his gift of food and wealth.[406] His friendly nature is transferred to the ethical side also as he is the friend of truth, the protector of truthfulness and the destroyer of untruth.[407] It is no surprise for a Sun-god to be akin to morality as Sūrya himself has been called as the protector of truth in the Vedic literature. The militant side of Mithra's personality casually indicated in the *Avesta* and the *Rigveda* was fully developed in the later Mithraism.[408] He has got spies to keep watch on the contract-breakers.[409]

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[386] *A.V.*, XIII.3.13—*Sa Varuṇaḥ Sāyamagnirbhavati Sa Mitrobhavati prāturuddyan.*

[387] Ibid., IX.3.18—*Varuṇena Samujitāṁ mitraḥ prātarvyayujatu.*

[388] Ibid., III.8.1.

[389] *T.S.*, IV.1.5.

[390] Ibid., II.1.7,4; VI.4.8.3.

[391] *S.B.*, VI.5.1.5.

[392] *T.S.*, 2.1.7.4, 9.1; *M.S.*, 2.5.7.

[393] Sāyaṇa on *R.V.*, I.89.3 says *'Mitraṁ pramītastrāyakamaharabhi-māninaṁ devaṁ.'* Similarly the commentator on *T.S.*, 1.8.16.1 affirms that the word *Mitra* denotes the Sun—*Mitrasālidasya Sūrya vācitvāt.* Sāyaṇa on *R.V.*, III.59 says that Mitra is the Sun—*prakarṣeṇa sarvairmīyate jñāyate tathā Sarvān Vrisṭi pradānena trāyataiti vā mitraḥ Sūryaḥ* While other commentators like Skandasvami, Durgācārya and Bhāskaramiśra take it simply as a friendly god, L. Sarup., op. cit., vol. III, p. 730, f.n. 18.

[394] *R.V.*, VII.62.4.—*Mitrasya priyatamasya Nriṇāṁ.*

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[395] Ibid., III.59.

[396] *T.S.*, IV.1.7; *A.B.*, III.4.

[397] *N.*, 10.22.

[398] *O.R.V.*, p. 188, n. 3.

[399] *R.V.*, X.12.5.

[400] Ibid., III.59.

[401] *T.S.*, II.1.8.4.

[402] *Ibid.*, III.59.1, 9; I.137.3; VII.66.19; V.72.3; cf. *Mithra Yaśta*, 31, 32, 41.

[403] *Ibid.*, III.59.2.

[404] Ibid., III.59.2, 3; *P.B.*, VI.10.4; *T.S.*, IV.7.15; *A.V.*, IV.29.1.

He is the creator of the world and the sovereign over all.[410] He is the officiating priest.[411] Thus Mitra is the Sun-god in his beneficient aspect of warmth. He is the giver of food and wealth. On the ethical side he is the protector of truth and faithfulness to contracts and agreements.

D. VIṢṆU

Viṣṇu is another god of the Vedic tradition who is generally considered to be a solar deity. Many scholars in the past have traced solar features in his personality.[412]

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[405] *R.V.*, III.59.5.

[406] Ibid., III.59.6.

[407] Ibid., V.67.4; I.151.1; cf. *Mithra Yaśta*, 80.

[408] Cumont, F., *The Mysteries of Mithra*, p. 31.

[409] *R.V.*, VII.61.3; cf. *Mithra Yaśta*, 45.

[410] Ibid., III.59.4—*rājā sukṣatro Ajaniṣṭa vedhāḥ;* cf. Mithra Yaśta, 65, 141, 61, 54.

[411] Ibid., III.5.4; cf. *Mithra Yaśta*, 89.

[412] Hopkins, E. W., Numerical Formula in the Veda, *J.A.O.S.*, vol. XVI, pp. 275–81; Hillebrandt, op. cit., II, pp. 316–25; Bergaigne, op. cit., pp. 414-15; Barth, op. cit., p. 20; Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 109; Renou, L., op. cit., p. 65; Ghate, *Lectures on the Rigveda*, pp. 153-54; Grierson, G. A., *J.A.*, 1908, p. 253. The name has been diversely explained (Gonda, op.cit., p. 4, f.n.11) but it does not lead us anywhere as regards his original nature.

To some he is the personification of the swiftly moving luminary,[413] to others he is the representative of the Sun-beam as the great generative power in the universe[414] or he is simply the Sun-bird[415] or he is an ethyphallic Sun-god.[416] Oldenberg[417] and following him many others[418] opposed this commonly accepted view. According to them Viṣṇu is the abstract god of the wide-space having nothing concrete corresponding to his three steps. Other anti-solar mythologists think that Viṣṇu is either the fundamental spirit of the ancestors[419] or the protector god of the universe[420] or the god of speculation[421] or the lightning god[422] or the power-numina[423] or the god of fertility.[424] Dandekar[425] believes that Viṣṇu had two aspects from the very beginning. Firstly, he was popular among the Āryan masses as the god of productivity. Secondly, among the higher classes of the Āryan society, he was conceived of as a Sun-god.

A critical study of the features of Viṣṇu in the Vedic literature will reveal that the solar theory of his origin ex-

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413. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 39.
414. Gonda, J., *Aspects of Early Visnuism*, p. 26.
415. Bloch, *Worter und Sachen*, I, p. 80. Charpentier, *Die Suparṇasage*, p. 324ff; K. F. Johansson, *Uber die altindische Gottin Dhisana*, p. 48.
416. Guntert, H., *Der arische Weltkonig und Heiland*, Halle, 1924, p. 305f.
417. op. cit., p. 228.
418. Griswold, op. cit., p. 285; Geldner, K. E., *Vedismus und Brahmanismus*, p. 34; Williams, M., *Brahmanism and Hinduism*, p. 9.
419. Johansson, K. F., *Solfageln -i-Indien* (1916), pp. 8ff.
420. Das A. C., *Rigvedic India*, vol. I, p. 420.
421. Jacobi, Quoted by Renou, op. cit., p. 63.
422. Ghose, N. N., Quoted by Dandekar, *Kāṇe Volume*, n-14.
423. Otto, R., Quoted by Dandekar, *Kāṇe Volume.*
424. Caland, *Twee oude Fransche verhandelingen*, p. 109; Dubois, J. A., *Moeurs, Institutions et ceremonies des peuples de l'Inde*, Nouv. Ed. Pondichery, 1921, II, p. 273.
425. Dandekar, R. N., Viṣṇu in the Veda, *A Volume of Studies in honour of Prof. Kāṇe*, 1941, pp. 95—111.

plains the traits and legends connected with him in a more satisfactory way than others. The idea of space so prominently singled out by Oldenberg for Viṣṇu's original nature may have been derived from the daily and ever-lasting motion of the Sun over the wide tracts of the heaven, the atmosphere and the earth.[426] It is no wonder if Viṣṇu as a Sun-god was conceived of as the spirit of the ancestors because the Sun was believed to be the abode of the dead in the Vedic literature.[427] Similarly his aspect of the productivity appears to have been derived from the fecundating capacity of the Sun. The Sun is the giver of rain and heat[428] which are essential for the growth of the vegetation. The Sun was conceived of as a great power of generation and fertility. His procreative potency was recognized all over the world in ancient times.[429] In many ancient civilizations the solar and the fertility aspects were combined in one and the same god.[430] Therefore, it is no surprise if Viṣṇu represented these two aspects simultaneously. The protector aspect has been emphasised in Viṣṇu's personality in the Vedic literature but it may have been derived from the Sun-god who is responsible for the vegetation and life in the universe.

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[426] *R.V.*, I.115.1,3; I.50.7; VII.63.4; VII.66.15; *A.V.*, XIII.2.35; XX.107.14; *Ars.S.*, 5.3; *V.S.*, 7.42; 13.46; *T.S.*, 1.4.43.1; 2.4.14.4; *M.S.*, 1.3.37; 43.9; *K.S.*, 4.9; 22.5; *S.B.*, 4.3.4.10; 7.5.2.27; *T.B.*, 2.8.7.4; *A.A.*, 3.2.3.10; *T.A.*, 1.7.6; 2.13.1.

[427] *R.V.*, IX.113.9; X.107.2, 154.5; I.109.7; cf. *S.B.*, 1.9.3.10; *A.V.*, IV.34.2.

[428] *R.V.*, V.44.4; I.164.52; See, *V.M.*, p. 32f.

[429] Commarswamy, A. K., The Sun-Kiss; *J.A.O.S.*, vol. 60, pp. 47—67.

[430] In ancient Mesopotamia the highest deities were often the Sun-gods and the fertility gods at the same time. In the Helios the Sun-god of Greece the vegetative aspect was mixed up. In Osiris of Egypt we find both the traits of the Sun and fertility-gods combined. In India itself the connection of the Sun with the lotus is indicative of his role as a god of fertility. See, G. Vander *Leceuw, Religion in essence and manifestation*, London, 1938, Ch. 7; *E.R.E.*, VIII, p. 144; James, E. O., *The Ancient Gods*, London, 1960.

Viṣṇu as The Spirit of The Sun's Rays:

As early as the *Rigveda* Viṣṇu appears to represent the Sun's rays and the qualities associated with them such as warmth, rain, etc. He is the spirit of the Sun's rays. The solar rays move swiftly and within no time traverse the three regions of the universe.[431] There is no corner of the earth, the atmosphere and the sky which remain untouched by them. In the *Rigveda*[432] the three elemental rays of the Sun are described as traversing the boundaries of the sky. In a similar fashion Viṣṇu is said as upholding the three elements, the earth and the heaven.[433] In both these descriptions there is a remarkable similarity and even the word *tridhātu* has been used in both. Sāyaṇa[434] interprets the word in the first case to mean the three elemental (cold. heat and rain-producing) rays of the Sun. Viṣṇu traverses the three regions by his three strides.[435] This is a characteristic quality of him in the Vedic literature throughout.[436] He symbolises the idea of motion as is revealed by the Vedic literature. This quality is associated with the Sun-gods. The Sun is a great source of motion in the universe. Epithets like *Urugāya, Urukrama* and *Vikrama* meaning swift motion are applied to him several times in the Vedic literature. This quality is characteristic of the Sun also.

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[431] *R.V.*, V.47.2,4.

[432] Ibid., V.47.4; *Tridhātavaḥ paramāsya gāvo divaścaranti parisadyo antān.*

[433] Ibid., I.154.4—*Ya u tridhātu prithvīmut dyāmeko dādhār bhuvanāni viśvā.*

[434] *tridhātavastriprakārāḥ Śitoṣṇavarṣābhedena.....* Max Müller, Ed. *R.V.*, II, p. 603. In the second case he interprets—*Tridhātu trayāṇāṁ dhātūnāṁ samaharas tridhātu prithviyaptejorūpadhātu tvayaviśiṣṭaṁ.* Max Müller, op. cit., vol. I., p. 663.

[435] *R.V.*, I.22.17; VI.49.13; VII.100.3; *A.V.*, 7.26.4; *S.V.*, I.222, II.1019; *V.S.*, 5.15; *T.S.*, I.2.13.1; *M.S.*, I.2.9, 18.17; 1.8.9; 130.12; 4.1.12; 16.4; 4.12.1; 170.3; *K.S.*, 2.10; A.B., 1.17.7, 25.9; *P.B.*, 20.3.2; *S.B.*, 1.6.8; 3.5.3.13; *T.B.*, 1.4.3.6. See, Gonda, J., op. cit., p. 55.

[436] See, Bloomfield, *A Vedic Concordance*, p. 198—*idaṁ Viṣṇu vi cakrame.*

Even the epithet *Vikrama* has been applied to Sūrya in the *Rigveda*[437] In view of these similarities it may be said that Viṣṇu is a personification of the Sun and particularly of its rays.

The supreme station of Viṣṇu has been likened to an eye in the sky in the Vedic literature.[438] The Sun has also been described as the eye in the Vedic literature.[439] In other ancient civilizations too the Sun is connected with the eye. There is a direct reference to the solar nature of Viṣṇu when it is said[440] that he, like a circular wheel causes ninety and four periodical revolutions. If the interpretation of Sāyaṇa[441] is to be believed here Viṣṇu has been identified with the Sun as Time. Time has been conceived of as comprising ninety-four periods: the year, two solstices, five seasons, twelve months, twenty-four half months, thirty days, eight watches and twelve zodiacal signs. Sūrya and other Sun-gods are often identified with Time in the Vedic literature.[442] It is significant to note that here *Cakra* has been identified with Viṣṇu. The symbol of the Sun-god in the Vedic literature has been a *Cakra*.[443] This became one of the prominent emblems of Viṣṇu in the later mythology.[444]

Three Step of Viṣṇu:

It is generally admitted that the three steps of Viṣṇu refer to the course of the Sun. It is not definitely known as to what aspect of the Sun these three steps represent. The purely naturalistic interpretation favoured by Aurṇāvābha,[445] a predecessor of Yāska, and many European scholars[446] takes them to mean the rising, the culminating and the setting of the Sun. This interpretation is at variance with the fact that the third step of Viṣṇu is not connected with the sun-set, on the contrary it is identical with the highest step.[447] Another view which prevails throughout the younger Vedas, Brāhmaṇas and also post-Vedic literature and was supported by Śākapūṇī,[448] another predecessor of Yāska, and many modern scholars,[449] interprets them as the course of the Sun through the three divisions of the universe. Tilak suggested that they represent the actual course[450] of the Sun divided into three parts. His first two steps are visible since the Sun is above the horizon while the third step is invisible because the Sun goes below the horizon. Shamasastri proposed another astronomical explanation.[451] To him the three steps are representatives of varying shadow-lengths. These astronomical interpretations are not supported by the traditional interpretations.[452]

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[437] *R.V.*, V.47.3.

[438] Ibid., I.22.20; *T.S.*, I.3.6; IV.2.9.

[439] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 30.

[440] *R.V.*, I.155.6.

[441] Max Müller, op. cit., vol. I, p. 666.

[442] *R.V.*, I.164.48; *A.V.*, XIX.53; *B.A.U.*, I.2.7.

[443] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 155.

[444] Gonda, J., op. cit., pp. 96f.

It appears that the three steps of Viṣṇu are the three elemental rays of the Sun which give the rain, the heat and the cold. In the *Rigveda*[453] three elemental rays of the Sun are referred to. Both, the Sun's rays and Viṣṇu[454] are said as traversing the three universe and as upholding

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445. *N.*, 12.19.

446. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 42, f.n. 5.

447. Ibid., p. 38.

448. *N.*, 12.19.

449. Keith, op. cit., p. 108; Gonda, op. cit., pp. 60-61; Dandeker, op. cit., pp. 102-3.

450. *Arctic Home*, pp. 304-5.

451. Quoted by Dandeker, op. cit., pp. 95–111.

452. It is doubtful whether the Indo-Āryans had a developed knowledge of astronomy in the Rigvedic age; Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 79.

453. *R.V.*, V.47.4.

454. Ibid., I.154.4.

tridhātu—three elements. It is quite natural for the rays to be branded as the steps of a Sun-god like Viṣṇu. Naturally this fits in with the belief of the Āryans that Viṣṇu is identical with the solar year and as such he is responsible for the movement of different seasons and other divisions of the time. In view of the fact that the rays of the Sun illuminate and energise the three regions of the universe daily and become the master of them his steps may have come to mean also the course of the Sun through the three divisions of universe in the later Vedic literature. Both the ideas may have been combined in this concept. The Sun-god, Savitri, has been described as having the golden rays as his hands and feet. The idea of rays as the steps of Viṣṇu is a similar concept. The rays of the Sun have been glorified several times in the Vedic literature.[455] On these scores we are inclined to interpret the three steps of Viṣṇu as the three elemental rays of the Sun in particular in the beginning and the rays as traversing the three regions in general in the later Vedic literature. The solar rays can rightly be described as the golden bird[456] and it is therefore not surprising that Viṣṇu may have been closely associated with the Sun-bird-Garuḍa.[457] It is significant to note that Sūrya has been identified with the bird Garuḍa as early as the *Rigveda*.[458] Sometimes it is simply called as *Suparṇa* which may mean a beautiful feathered bird as well as the beautiful rays of the Sun. Therefore, it is not proper to regard Viṣṇu as simply a bird.[459] He like Sūrya has been figuratively described as a bird. It conveys the idea of motion because the birds are associated with the swift motion in ancient mythology.

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455. *R.V.*, I.50.3—*adriśramasya ketavo vi raśmayo janāṅ anu,* I.115.1,5; VII.62.1; *A.V.*, VII.107.1 *Ava divastāryanti sapta Sūryasya raśmayaḥ*; *T.S.*, 1.2.1; 1.2.8; 1.4.39; IV.1.2.
456. *R.V.*, I.164.46.
457. Gonda, op. cit., p. 102. The earliest reference to him as Garuḍa seems to be *T.A.*, 10.1.6; *A.V.*, XIII. 3.8.
458. *R.V.*, I.164.46; I.175.4; IV.30.4; IV.28.2.
459. Gonda, op. cit., pp. 101-2, f.n. 37—46.

Evidence of Later Vedic Literature:

The later Vedic literature brings forth in clear terms the solar nature of Viṣṇu. In the *Atharvaveda*[460] Āditya—the Sun-god has been identified with Viṣṇu. It is significant to note that the first invocation of the priest in the morning goes to Viṣṇu and Varuṇa.[461] The morning invocation is connected with the Sun-gods. Again Viṣṇu has been asked to bestow the heat[462] which is an appropriate quality of the Sun. In the Brāhmaṇas[463] the head of Viṣṇu when cut off becomes the Sun and he has been directly identified with the year.[464] In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* the highest step of Viṣṇu has been directly identified with the Sun. In view of all these evidences Viṣṇu may be regarded as the spirit of the Sun's rays. All the functions and qualities associated with them are attributed to Viṣṇu—particularly the fecundating and generating aspect of the Sun.

Thus he is connected with the swift motion of the Sun. Coupled with it is the idea of regularity[465] which has been attributed to him. This is quite natural for a Sun-god. His connection with the mountains in the Vedic literature[466] is also indicative of his solar origin because it was an ancient belief that the Sun rises from the mountain. Moreover, the mountains are stores of water.[467]

Śipiviṣṭa, Its Meaning:

Viṣṇu has been qualified as *śipiviṣṭa* in the *Rigveda*. This term has been a matter of keen controversy.[468] Some take it to mean as the baldness or the skin desease,[469] others regard it as expressive of a hairy dwarf[470] or the concealed Sun below the horizon,[471] or the obscure solar rays during the night or the rainy seasons[472] or the changing phallus[473] or Viṣṇu's entrance into lightning.[474] Sāyaṇa interprets the epithet to mean 'as covered by the rays'. He informs us that the term has got a contemptible meaning also ac- cording to Aupmanyu. The latter thinks that it means the penis entered like the rays.[475] Yāska says that it is another name of Viṣṇu. Mādhava—a pre-Sāyaṇa commentator also takes the term to mean as covered by the rays. Bhattabhās- kara Miśra[476] suggests that the rays at the time of the Sun- rise look like the penis. That is why it is said that it has a contemptible meaning.[477] Skandaswāmi also takes the word to mean originally the rays.[478] If the traditional interpretations are to be believed it may mean the Sun-rays in the first instance and the abusive meaning appears to have been given to it in the second instance on account of their prominent role in productivity and procreation in the universe. In the later Vedic literature this form is intimately connected with the cattle and fool.[479] It is gene-

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[460] *A.V.*, XVII.1.8.

[461] Ibid., VII.25.

[462] Ibid., V.26.7.

[463] *S.B.*, XIV.1.1.10; cf. VI.7.2.9.

[464] Ibid., IV.4.4.5.

[465] *R.V.*, I.22.18; I.155.6; I.156.2,3; *A.V.*, VII.26.5

[466] *R.V.*, I.154. 2, 3; *T.S.*, 3.4.51. See, *O.R.V.*, p. 230; n. 21; Macdonell, *J.R.A.S.*, 27, 174, n. 2; Gonda, op. cit., pp. 73—76.

[467] *S.B.*, 7.5.2.18.

[468] *R.V.*, VII.99.7; VII.100.5; *M.S.*, II.2.13; *T.S.*, II.4.5; IV.4.9; VII.3.15.

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469. *O.R.V.*, 227.30; Hopkins, op. cit., p. 56.

470. Geldner, K. F., *V.S.*, Stuttgart, 1901, p. 81.

471. Tilak, op. cit., pp. 307–9.

472. Das, A. C., op. cit., pp. 547-48.

473. Dandekar, op. cit., p. 108; *N.*, V.7; Guntert, op. cit., p. 305; Johansson, *Solfageln*, p. 12ff; Charpentier, *V.O.J.*, 25, p. 427; Keith, Veda, *B.I.Y.S.*, p. 194, n. 1; 622 n. 6.

474. Gonda, op. cit., p. 106.

475. Max Müller, op. cit., vol. III, p. 208.

476. Sarup L., op. cit., IV, p. 1143 f.n. 16.

477. Ibid., p. 1146, f.n. 10.

478. Ibid.

479. *P.B.*, 18.6.26 says that Śipiviṣṭa is Prajāpati's manifestation being in the form of cattle. *eśā vai prājapateḥ paśusthās tanūr yañ śipiviṣṭaṁ*; cf. *M.S.*, 1.11.9; 171.8; *Kath.*, 14.10, 209.8; Sāyaṇa on *T.S.*, 2.5.5.2 says that since Viṣṇu is Prajāpati, therefore he is Śipiviṣṭa.

rally said that this form was not popular among the higher circles of the Āryans and it is taken as an evidence in favour of the theory that Viṣṇu was either a god of the Āryan masses or of the aboriginal races of India. It may be remembered that the author of the hymn longs for the real form of Viṣṇu and prays that he may not conceal his real form which is represented by *Śipiviṣṭa*. If this form would have been popular particularly among the aboriginals or the masses there is no reason as to why a Vedic saint who was definitely a member of the higher circles of the Āryan society should have prayed for that form. If the interpretation that it means 'as covered with the rays' is accepted this longing for the real form of Viṣṇu appears to be a justified aspiration. Viṣṇu is the spirit of the Sun's rays and his real form may be revealed to the worshipper only when the veil of rays is removed. It is quite probable that this *sūkta* has been inspired by a high philosophical ideal. The ultimate reality is said in the Vedic literature as covered with the rays of the Sun. In the Upaniṣads[480] it is said that there are two forms of reality–the ultimate and the immediate. The *puruṣa* in the Sun is the ultimate reality while the orb of the Sun is the concrete reality. It is probably in this sense that this has been employed. In the *Rigveda*[481] it is said that it is through the rays that men attain the Sun. It is also said that men attain the world of Viṣṇu though the rays of the Sun. In the *Rigveda*[482] it is specifically said that he favours the Āryas. In view of all these we take this phrase as simply exemplifying the naturalistic tradition of the Āryans. It means as covered with the rays. It is neither indicative of Viṣṇu's connection with the Āryan masses nor affiliation to the non-Āryans.

Viṣṇu and Fertility:

Viṣṇu is the great source of fertility, procreation and vegetation. This quality of Viṣṇu in the Vedic and the post-Vedic literature is so prominent that many regard him primarily as the god of fertility.[483] He has been frequently asked to bestow food in the *Rigveda.*[484] In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*[485] also he is associated with the food and the plants. In the later Vedic literature[486] he continues to be associated with the plants and the food. In the *Atharvaveda*[487] he is said to be born of butter (*ghritayoni*) which is indicative of his fertility aspect. His feet are full of honey.[488] Honey is intimately connected with the fertility.[489] He is said in the Brāhmaṇas to have hidden himself in the root of the plants. In the conception rite Viṣṇu is prayed to lay the womb.[490] He is said as blessing his worshippers with children[491] particularly male. In the marriage ritual[492] also Viṣṇu figures prominently which is also a proof of his connection with the procreation.[493] Philosophically he is said to maintain the world-seed.[494] He is the giver of all types of riches.[495]

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[480] *B.A.U.*, II.3.1; *Maitrī U.*, VI.3.

[481] *R.V.*, I.50.10.

[482] Ibid., I.156.5.

Viṣṇu as The Protector:

Naturally a god who is responsible for the production of food, children and plants will essentially be a beneficient and liberal god.[496] Viṣṇu is a great benefactor of humanity. His protection is sought for. He is the protector par-excellance. He took his three strides to protect the man in distress,[497] to provide him a dwelling.[498] In the Brāhmaṇas he assumes the dwarf form in order to assist the god against the demons.[499] In the Vedic rituals he is concerned with redress and expiation.[500] Thus the preserver-aspect of Viṣṇu which became the chief feature in the post-Vedic Viṣṇuism[501] is clearly expressed in the Vedic literature from the very beginning.

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[483] Gonda, J., op. cit., pp. 25, 11.

[484] *R.V.*, I.156.1; VII.99.6.

[485] *T.S.*, 5.2.8.7.

[486] *S.B.*, 7.5.1.21; *Maitrī Up.*, 6.13.

[487] *A.V.*, 7.26.3; *T.S.*, 1.3.4; *A Vedic Concordance*, p. 358.

[488] *R.V.*, I.154.4; *T.S.*, 3.10.2; *Sm.B.*, 2.8.12; *G.G.S.*, 4.10.15.

[489] Gonda, *op. cit.*, p. 16, f.n. 25.

[490] *S.B.*, 1.2.5–10.

[491] *A.V.*, V.25.5; *G.G.S.*, II.5.9; *H.G.S.*, 1.25.

[492] *A.V.*, VII.17.4.

[493] Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras*, p. 466; *H.G.S.*, 1.6.20.9; *P.G.S.*, 1.8.2.

[494] *A.V.*, IX.10.17.

[495] Ibid., 7.26.8; *V.S.*, 5.19; *T.S.*, 1.2.13.2.

[496] *R.V.*, VII.99.3; VII.100.2; I.154.5; I.156.1.

Origin of Viṣṇu's Prominence:

It is said that Viṣṇu is not a prominent deity in the *Rigveda* and it is only in the Brāhmaṇas after his identification with the sacrifice[502] that he becomes a god of capital importance. It is significant to point out that Viṣṇu's greatness is already indicated in the *Rigveda*. His identification with the sacrifice in the Brāhmaṇas which is supposed to be the cause of his eminence has its roots in the *Rigveda*. Roychoudhuri and Bhandarkar suggest that Viṣṇu may have been of capital importance in the *Rigveda* itself when he is said to be the germ of the sacrifice.[503] The god of food and subsistence will naturally be the source of the sacrifice. He is said to have come to the institutor of the rite to assist at the celebration of the sacrifice.[504] He admits the author of the ceremony to a share of the sacrifice.[505] Thus Viṣṇu was connected with the sacrifice from the very beginning as some of these statements occur in the family books of the *Rigveda*. There are other descriptions showing his prominence. It is said that his magnitude can not be comprehended.[506] His third step is beyond the reach of all. His third step is the supreme power in the universe.[507] All the three worlds are engulfed in his third step.[508] He is the creator, the sustainer and the benefactor of the mankind. Thus Viṣṇu was already a god of no mean importance in the oldest stratum of the *Rigveda*. It is from this genus that he attains unqualified prominence in the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads and ultimately becomes one of the chief gods of Hinduism.

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[497] *R.V.*, I.155.5; 155.4.

[498] Ibid., VII.100.4.

[499] *A.B.*, VI.15f; *S.B.*, I.9.39; *T.S.*, II.1.3.1; cf. *R.V.*, VI.49.13.

[500] Gonda, op. cit., pp. 21–24.

[501] Ibid.,

[502] *A.B.*, 1.15; *K.B.*, IV.2; *P.B.*, IX.7; *S.B.*, 14.1.1. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 37.

[503] *R.V.*, I.156.3–*tamu stotāraḥ pūryaṁ yathā vid ritasya garbhaṁ*. I fail to understand as to why Gonda, op. cit., p. 1, f.n. 1 takes it as a case of stray reference. cf. *T.B.*, 2.4.3.9.

[504] *R.V.*, I.156.5.

[505] Ibid.–*ritasya bhāge yajamānamābhajat*. He is cognisant of the highest. (*R.V.*, VII.99.1). He is the most powerful of the powerful (Ibid. VII.100.3).

Thus Viṣṇu was worshipped in the Vedic literature as the spirit of the Sun's rays in its capacity of creation, preservation and maintenance. The solar motion and its regularity also came to be worshipped under this name.

There are a few references in the *Rigveda* which may have given scope for later sectarians to develop a sect round his name. Once the attitude of *bhakti* in relation to him is expressed when it is said that the worshippers adore him with entirely devoted mind.[509] A sort of intimacy is expressed between him and the worshipper.[510] The idea of self-surrender is also expressed.[511]

E. PŪṢAN

Pūṣan is generally included in the group of solar gods in the Vedic literature. But his original nature is a matter of keenest controversy. Even those who believe in the solar nature of this god confess that he is particularly an enigmatical figure in the Vedic pantheon. Consequently many theories have been propounded regarding his original basis. From the point of view of approach they may be divided into three classes. Firstly, several scholars have emphasised only single aspect of his personality. In this category some viewed him simply as the Sun-god[512] while others took him to be the god of moon[513] or the god of paths[514] or the god of thrift[515] or the representative of Arora Constellation.[516] In the second place, it is suggested that from the very beginning an inherently mixed concept of his personality was evolved and from this point of view he represents the beneficient power of the Sun manifested chiefly as the pastoral deity.[517] Thirdly, from the point of view of evolutionary mythology or historical approach[518] he was the pastoral god in the beginning, in the second stage he represented the moon and in the post-Vedic period he came to be identified with the Sun.

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[506] *R.V.*, VII.99.1.

[507] Ibid., I.155.5; VII.99.2.

[508] Ibid., I.154.2.

[509] Ibid., VII.100.1—*manasā yajāta*.

[510] Ibid., I.156.1,4,5; I.154.4.

[511] Ibid., VII.100.5 uses the word *atavyān* for the worshipper which according to Sāyaṇa means feeble—*abridhataroham*. Other ancient commentators also take it in the same sense. See, L. Sarup, op. cit., vol. IV., pp. 1147, f.n. 8.

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512. Hillebrandt, op. cit., III, 362ff; Roth, R., *P.W.*, IV.854; Wilson (Tr.), *R.V.*, vol. I, p. XXXV; Bloomfield, *The Religion of the Veda*, pp. 170-71; Hopkins, op. cit., p. 50; Keith, op. cit., p. 107. Ragozin, op. cit., p. 236; Grassmann, H. (Tr.), *R.V.*, *Gubbernatis, De Letture Sopra La Mitslogia Veden*, p. 82; Atkins, *Pūṣan in the Rigveda*, Princeton, 1941; Deshmukh, P. S., op. cit., p. 227; Weber, *Rājasūya*, p. 84, n. 2. This view has been shared by many others as Grill, Goldstucker, Langlois, Max Müller, Ludwig, Flensburg, etc. See Dandekar, *N.I.A.*, 1941, vol. V., pp. 50ff. cf. Stella Kramrisch, Pūṣan, *J.A.O.S.*, vol. 81, pp. 104ff; cf. Ancient commentators-Yāṣka (7—9) *Brihaddevatā* (2.63) and Sāyaṇa take him to be the Sun-god.

513. Sicke, *Hermes der Mondgott and Pūṣan*, quoted by Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 107, f.n. 7.

514. *O.R.V.*, 234—37.

515. Griswold, op. cit., p. 282.

516. Ghosh, E.H., *J.A.S.B.*, No. XXXIII, pt. 32, pp. 91-92.

517. Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 37.

518. Dandekar, R. N., Pūṣan, the Pastoral god of the Veda, *N.I.A.*, vol. V., 1942, pp. 49—64. Drisler, Notes on the Vedic deity Pūṣan in *Classical Studies in honour of H. Drisler*, 1894, p. 242 and Guntert, op. cit., p. 41ff also have taken him to be the pastoral god.

Criticism of Oldenberg's Theory:

No doubt Pūṣan's connection with paths is quite intimate in the *Rigveda*[519] but the latter does not appear to have been his original basis. It is difficult to explain as to how the god of paths is connected with the prosperity of cattles—a trait which is equally important in his personality in the *Rigveda*[520] and the later Vedic literature.[521] If he is the god of paths his region of activity would not have been celestial as is mentioned in the *Rigveda*.[522] In the socio-economic life of the Vedic Āryans the paths and roads do not appear to have played such an important part as to create the necessity for the evolution of the god of paths exclusively. In their agro-pastoral economy the production of the food and the prosperity of cattles were more important than the safety of routes and trade-channels.[523] The concept of the god of paths is general and vague.[524] It conflicts with the anthropomorphic traits such as a beard,[525] braided[526] hair,

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519. *R.V.*, VI.49.8; 53.1.4, 54.9; X.59.7. See *V.M.*, pp. 35-36.
520. Ibid., VI.48.15; VI.54.5,6,7,10; VI.55.2,3; X.26.3. His epithets *puṣṭimbhara, purūvasu, anaṣṭavedas, viśvavedas* and the etymology of his name (*puṣ*=to cause to thrive) show the intimate connection between him and the prosperity.
521. *M.S.*, 4.3.7; *T.B.*, I.7.24; *S.G.S.*, 3.9.
522. Ibid., II.40.1; VI.58.3.
523. Banerjee, N. C., *Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India*, p. 154 opines that the scope of trade was occasional and limited as it was an age of economic self-sufficiency. See, Balram Srivastava, *Trade and Commerce in Ancient India*, p.16. Most of the references for trade in the *Rigveda* are in connection with the Paṇis. Those which are found independent of them are generally late as they are not found in the family books. *R.V.*, I.112.11; I.56.2; I.116.5; X.156.3.
524. Pūṣan's worship appears quite prominent in the *Rigveda*. Hilledrandt, op. cit., vol. I, p. 456 is so much impressed by his worship that he calls the Pūṣan Sūktas in the sixth maṇḍala as a small *Pūṣan-Saṁhitā*. A god of path could not have become so popular in that economy.
525. *R.V.*, X.26.7.
526. Ibid., VI.55.2.

golden spear[527] and awl or goad[528] etc. given to Pūṣan. He has got a distinct individuality[529] of his own in matters of food also[530] and a car[531] peculiar in nature is also given to him. Moreover, Pūṣan is not a fit name for the god of paths. The etymology (*Puṣ*=to increase, *Pū*=to purify or *Pū*=to glow) does not lend support to the theory. The theory of paths is again in conflict with the basic trait of the Vedic mythology which lies in its worship of Nature.[532]

Criticism of Griswold's Theory:

Similarly the theory connecting him with thrift is also not supported by the evidences. In the *Rigveda* it is specifically said that Pūṣan may instil large heartedness[533] in the hearts of misers and non-believers. He is liberal in bestowing wealth.[534] A god of thrift could not have been prayed for large-heartedness and extravagance. Some of the arguments advanced against the theory of Oldenberg may be applied to this theory also. For example, the naturalism of the Vedic thought, the anthropomorphism of Pūṣan's personality and the vagueness of the concept of the 'he of thrift' go against these assumptions.

The astronomical interpretation of his personality is also not borne out by the textual testimony of the *Rigveda*[535] as well as by the traditional commentators.[536] Other theories are based upon insufficient and unreliable data and need no serious consideration.[537]

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[527] *R.V.*, VI.53.5,6.

[528] Ibid., VI.53.9; 58.2.

[529] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 35 doubts it but Dandekar *N.I.A.*, V., pp. 49—64 has rightly shown that he has got an individuality.

[530] *R.V.*, VI.56.1.

[531] Ibid., VI.54.3.

[532] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 2.

[533] *R.V.*, VI.53.2,6,7.

[534] Ibid., 58.1

[535] There is no evidence to show that the astronomy was in a developed stage as is envisaged by the theory. Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 79.

[536] Yāska and *Brihaddevatā* expressly state him to be the Sun. Sāyaṇa does not give any alternative view.

Criticism of Dandekar's Theory:

It is admitted that Pūṣan has been intimately connected with cattles and pastoral life in the *Rigveda*[538] but this may not have been his original basis.[539] The very basis of Dandekar's theory that Pūṣan has no naturalistic basis in origin is open to serious criticism. In the *Rigveda* Pūṣan's connection with the nature is quite intimate as he is asked to bestow rain[540] and to move the solar chariot.[541] He is the son of the cloud,[542] the brother of Indra,[543] the husband of the Sūryā[544] and an associate of Soma,[545] Bhaga,[546] and Viṣṇu.[547] These descriptions and connections definitely show his natural basis. It is needless to remind that the Vedic mythology centres round the worship of the nature.

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537. For example, the lunar theory is not corroborated by any evidence in the *Rigveda* except Pūṣan's connection with Soma—a moon-god which is a superimposed feature in his personality. It is also not correct to say that the moon was more important than the Sun in the primitive mythology. See, Olcott, W.T., *Sun-lore of All Ages*, pp. 34—50.

538. *R.V.*, I.5.1,2; VI.54.5; VI.53.9; cf. *M.S.*, 4.3.7; *T.B.*, I.7.2.4. Pūṣan is the only god who receives the title *Paśupā*, VI.58.2.

539. Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 37 admits that his bucolic features form a part of his general nature as a promoter of prosperity. It is no surprise if Sun-gods are assigned bucolic traits. For example, Mithra—the solar deity of the *Avesta* has been given this feature, Spiegel *Die Arische Periode*, p. 184.

540. *R.V.*, X.26.2,3.

541. Ibid., VI.56.3.

542. Ibid., I.42.1.,

543. Ibid., VI.57.1; VI.55.5.

544. Ibid., VI.55.5; VI.58.4.

545. Ibid., II.40.

546. Ibid., I.90.4; I.41.4; I.46.2; IV.30.24.

547. Ibid., I.10.4; V.46.3; VI.21.9; VII.44.1; X.66.5.

His patent method of evolutionary mythology as applied to Pūṣan is not warranted by the Vedic literature. In the later Vedic literature we do not find any new trait in his personality. There is no growth of his personality in the later Vedic literature where he is a faded figure.[548] It is again in the post-Vedic period that he regains his life and consequently in the Purāṇas[549] in keeping with his original basis he is identified directly with the Sun-god. There is hardly any reference in the later Vedic literature which may show that he came to represent the moon in this period. His intimacy with Soma is Rigvedic in origin and is an essential trait. To say that the moon is more important in ancient mythology is not correct and particularly with reference to India. Charpentier's[550] derivation of the word Pūṣan from *P'sūsan* and further back from *P'sūsan*—'the acquirer of cattle' which is taken by Dandekar in support of his theory is unusual and far-fetched. The light symbolism taken by Dandekar as secondary in Pūṣan appears to be as original to him as his connection with the pastoral life.[551]

Pūṣan and The Solar Theory:

The descriptions and epithets of Pūṣan in the *Rigveda* support only the solar theory of his original nature. There are two characteristic epithets of Pūṣan in the *Rigveda*—

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548. The glory of Pūṣan was declining in the later Vedic period. The word occurs only about 30 times in *A.V.* and occupies such an insignificant place in *A.V.* pantheon that he has been omitted by Karamvelkar, *Atharvavedic Civilization.* See, Bloomfield, *A Vedic Concordance.* In the Brāhmaṇas also he is sparingly invoked and is a faded figure in contrast to his lively figure in the *R.V.*

549. Pūṣan is one of the popular names of the Sun-god in the Purāṇas. See, *Viṣṇu P.*, II.10.14; *Matsya P.*, LXXIX Pūṣan is one of the twelve Ādityas. *Viṣṇu P.*, II.10.11.

550. Quoted by Dandekar, op. cit., pp. 49—64.

551. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 35 has rightly said that *Āghriṇi* meaning glowing indicative of light symbolism is a frequent and exclusive epithet of Pūṣan.

āghriṇi[552] (glowing) and *agohya*[553] (not to be concealed). Bloomfield[554] claims for this god a clearly solar character solely on the strength of the first epithet. If this epithet is given to Agni also then it does not prove that it is general, as it has been presumed by Dandekar, because Agni is connected with the Sun. The second epithet is applicable only to the Sun, the moon being concealed in the day time. There are direct identifications between him and the Sun in the *Rigveda*. He has been likened to the Sun when it is said that one of his forms is luminous and one is venerable and thus the day is variously complexioned.[555] There is no doubt that the bright day and the black night supposed to be the two faces of the Sun-god are here referred to. In another description he is said to have been discharging the office of the massenger of the Sun with his golden vessels moving in the ocean of firmament.[556] He is the bringer of six seasons successively[557]—a description which fits in with the Sun only. He is said to have drawn the golden chariot of the Sun.[558] This is not indicative of any antagonism between Pūṣan and the Sun; on the other hand it tends to show that Pūṣan was the driving spirit behind the movement of the Sun. There is a remarkable similarity between him and the Sun at many occasions. Like Sūrya he sees all creatures clearly and at once[559] and is the lord of all moving and stationary things.[560] He is driven in a golden chariot like Sūrya.[561] Pūṣan's picture as the weilder of a golden[562] spear reminds us the golden arms and weapons of Savitri—another Sun-god in the Vedic tradition. Pūṣan's golden ships moving in the aerial[563] ocean, his abode in heaven[564] and his description as surrounded by golden grass[565]—all these point to his connection with the Sun-god. Pūṣan's wandering between the heaven and the earth[566] can be explained only if we assume that he is a Sun-god because the Sun is the only phenomenon which is famous for its daily journey to these regions. It is not a casual reference, as it has been taken by Dandekar because it is not given to gods outside the solar pantheon.[567]

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[552] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 35. See, *R.V.*, VI.48.16; VI.53.3,8,9; VI.55.1.3; I.138.4; Neiser in his supplement to Grassmann's *Dictionary* translates it as liberal or generous but there is no reason to doubt the interpretation of Sāyaṇa—*āgatadīptayukta*'.

[553] *V.M.*, p. 35.

[554] *The Religion of the Veda*, p. 172.

[555] *R.V.*, VI.58.1; *Śukraṁ te anyad yajataṁ te anyad Viṣurūpe ahanī dyaorivāsi*. Here Sāyaṇa interprets *dyaor* as the Sun—*Yathā dyaorādityaḥ prakāśayitaḥ tathā tvaṁ prakāśokoasi*, Max Müller, II, p. 847.

[556] Ibid., VI.58.3—*tābhiryāsi dūtyāṁ Sūryasya*.

[557] Ibid., I.23.15.

[558] Ibid., VI.56.3.

[559] Ibid., III.62.9; cf. VII.35.8; X.37.1; I.50.2.

If Pūṣan is the wooer of his sister[568] it is not unusual for a Sun-god as similar descriptions are found for Sūrya and other Sun-gods.[569] His relation with Sūrya is also indicative of his solar connections. Pūṣan's car is drawn by a goat.[570] He possesses a beard[571] and the braided hair.[572] These are his characteristics in the Vedic literature. They may be explained on the basis of his solar origin. In the *Rigveda* itself Aja Ekapāda, a solar deity[573] was conceived in the form of a goat. The Sun was connected with the goat in ancient mythology because the latter is the most sure-footed animal[574] and may be helpful in long journeys which the Sun takes every day. In many ancient countries also the Sun has been described as having a beard.[575]

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[560] *R.V.*, I.89.5; cf. I.115.1.

[561] Ibid., II.40.2.

[562] Ibid., I.42.6.

[563] Ibid., VI.58.6.

[564] Ibid., II.40.4.

[565] Ibid., I.23.13.

[566] See, Bloomfield, *A Vedic Concordance*.

[567] Shamash—The Sun-god of Babylonia was also known as a judge of the heaven and the earth. See, Jastrow, M., *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 210.

[568] *R.V.*, VI.56.4,5.

[569] Ibid., I.115.2; X.3.3.

[570] Ibid., VI.55.3.4; I.38.4.

[571] Ibid., X.26.7.

[572] Ibid., VI.55.2.

[573] Dumont, P. E., The Indic God—Aja Ekapāda. The One legged Goat; *J.A.O.S.*, vol. 53, 1933, pp. 326–334.

Pūṣan's connection with the path, his guardianship of the roads[576] and his act to lead dead[577] to the far path of fathers may be explained on the solar basis. The Sun travels from one corner of the universe to the other looking everyone. He knows every nook and corner of the universe. It is natural for such a god to be the master of paths and roads. In the Vedic mythology the Sun is supposed to be the abode of fathers.[578] It is only through his rays that the dead is transported to the Sun-home. The Sun acts as a messenger between the heaven and the earth and as such is capable of leading the departed to the heaven.

The Sun was conceived as the heavenly herdsman in the Vedic mythology.[579] It is a familiar notion with the Āryans to view the heaven as a vast pasture where cattles and cows roam about in the form of clouds. It is quite in the fitness of things that an agro-pastoral community like the Indo-Āryans made Pūṣan—the Sun as the god of cattles and pastures.[580]

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[574] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 35.

[575] Pūṣan's connection with Bhaga and Viṣṇu, the solar deities, also indicates his solar basis.

[576] *R.V.*, VI.53.1 expressly says—*Vayamu tvā pathaspate.* It is repeated in later Vedic literature. *T.S.*, I.1.14.1; *S.S.S.*, 3.5.7; *A.G.*, 9.8; *R. vidh.*, 2.23.1; cf. *Brd.*, 5.118. Therefore, it is a characteristic feature. cf. *R.V.*, VI.53.4; X.17.6; I.42.7,8,9; VI.17.6.

[577] *R.V.*, X.17.6; I.42.13; VI.17.6.

[578] *V.M.*, p. 167; cf. *R.V.*, IX.110.9; I.109.7.

[579] Ragozin, op. cit., p. 236; Griswold, op. cit., p. 281; cf. *R.V.*, I.17.3.

[580] *RV.*, VI.53.9,10; 54.5,6,7; X.26.3.

The prosperity of an agro-pastoral society depended upon the fertility of the soil and the abundance of domestic cattles. The cattles like cows were also the medium of exchange.[581] Hence their importance was doubled. The Sun is responsible for the rain and light essential for the productivity of the vegetable world. In ancient mythologies the Sun-gods were assigned the role of production and fertilization which was extended to the animal and human worlds also.[582] Thus the procreative potency of the Sun was recognized also over the ancient world. Pūṣan's connection with the prosperity can be understood in the light of above interpretation. This aspect of Pūṣan's personality appears to have been derived from the Sun. To us it appears that Pūṣan represents primarily the prosperity aspects of the Sun as it is not difficult for a god of prosperity to express his personality in terms of the giver of abundant cattles and their protector and as the guardian of paths whose safety was so essential for the trade and the commerce.[583] It must be said that the aspect of prosperity covers his other important aspects also such as his guardianship of roads, his protection of cattles and his role as the giver of food and the nourisher of humanity. No other single aspect of his personality is capable of explaining other aspects on one basis. If it is supposed that his pastoral aspect is primary it is not understandable as to why he should be a god of paths or he should give rain or as to why he should be prayed to inspire liberality in the hearts of *Paṇis*.

Pūṣan's Connection with the Paṇis:

It is interesting to note that Pūṣan is intimately connected with a particular class of people known as *Paṇis*.[584]

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[581] See, S. K. Chakravarty, *Ancient Indian Numismatics*.

[582] Coomarswamy, A. K., The Sun-kiss, *J.A.O.S.*, vol. 60, pp.46–67; Titier, M., The Sun-kiss, *J.A.O.S.*, 60, p. 270.

[583] Srivastava, B., *Trade and Commerce in Ancient India*, Chs. IV & V.

[584] *R.V.*, VI.53.3,5,6,7. It is specific of Pūṣan as it is not repeated. See, Keith, *Rigvedic Repetitions*. It is also im-

There is a lot of controversy regarding their identification.[585] It is generally admitted that they were traders and most probably they were non-Āryans.[586] In the *Rigveda*[587] itself it is said that they do not accept the religio-social system of the *Āryans*. They have been branded as non-believers.[588] It is on account of this that they are abused and looked down upon by the Vedic priests[589] whom probably they never patronized. Since they were prosperous the Vedic society could not ignore them. Moreover, they were indulging in the trade and the commerce which was not a popular subject of economic life among the Indo-Āryans.[590] Therefore, their utility might have led to their acceptance, though unwelcome in the society. In many *sūktas* of the *Rigveda* Pūṣan has been associated with the *Paṇis*. He has been asked to generate generosity in their hearts so that they become complacent towards the priest.[591]

It appears as if Pūṣan had some sort of control over the *Paṇis*. He may have been their god. It becomes quite probable in view of the fact that both had common field of activity.[592] Both aimed at prosperity. The pros-

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portant to note that they cease to figure in the later Vedic literature. See, *A Vedic Concordance*.

585. *Vedic Index*, vol. I, pp. 471-72; Srivastava, B., op. cit., pp. 17–20.

586. *Vedic Index*, vol. I, p. 472.

587. *R.V.*, I.124.10; IV.51.3; VIII.45.14.

588. Ibid., VI.51.4 brands him as a wolf, the symbol of enmity.

589. *Vedic Index*, p. 471. f.n.

590. Srivastava, B., op. cit., pp. 17–21.

591. *R.V.*, VI.53.5,7.

592. In *T.S.*, 1.8.8. a very significant reference is found where oblations to various gods are referred to as being given in the house of persons of different occupations. In the case of Pūṣan it is to be given in the house of *'bhāgadugha'*—a tax-collector or divider. It shows Pūṣan's connection with the business community. See, *Vedic Index*, vol. II, p. 100.

perity is the ideal of a trading community. Similarly Pūṣan was the god of prosperity. It is quite natural that a society or a community selects its gods according to its nature and needs. There are some indirect hints to the fact that Pūṣan was not liked by the Vedic society. At one place it is said that we do not censure Pūṣan, on the other hand we praise him.[593] In another hymn of the same *manḍala*[594] it is said that the seer never ceases to think of him and never disregards his friendship. There is a pointed reference to the effect that the favour shown by Pūṣan to the seer is a recent one.[595] It shows that originally he was not the god of the Āryans. This apologetic tone on the part of the Vedic seer can be explained on the assumption that he was not liked by them and in some circles he was censured but circumstances led to his grudging acceptance in the Vedic society. It is significant to note that these descriptions generally occur in the first *manḍala*—a non-family book. It shows that this apology was a later theme and was a result of probably guilty-conscience. In the sixth *manḍala* itself a sort of fear-complex is seen in the minds of Bharadvājas. Many times it is said that he may not harm us. It is a repeated theme in this *manḍala*.

It is also significant to note that the food of Pūṣan is a peculiar one and is different from the normal food of the Vedic deities. No other deity can be indicated by this food except Pūṣan.[596] It is *karambha* which is according to Sāyaṇa, a mixture of parched barley meal and butter.[597] In another hymn[598] a contrast has been drawn between his food which is *karambha* and that of Indra which is Soma. This individuality of Pūṣan in matters of food and its non-conformity with the general pattern can be explained on the assumption that Pūṣan was originally a god outside the pale of the Āryan society. In the later Vedic literature[599] this has been explained in a childlike fashion by saying that he is toothless and hence is an eater of rice. By the later Vedic times the Āryans had settled in northern India and they had adopted a compromising attitude. But it can be seen that in spite of this childlike explanation the original hatred and grudge reappeared in his case as he is less and less frequently invoked in the later Vedic period,[600] and is degraded to the fourth order of the Āryan society in the Upaniṣads.[601] It is also relevant to note that the *paṇis* are also very rarely mentioned in the later Saṁhitās and they cease to figure at all in the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads. This co-incidence is also a pointer in the direction that Pūṣan was probably a god of the *paṇis* in the beginning. It is again important to point out that the Bharadvājas who are special priest of Pūṣan in the *Rigveda*[602] are not regarded as very high in the *Ārṣeya Upaniṣad*[603] where they are shown as upholding the view that the Sun is the highest reality—a view which is opposed by Gautama. The latter in a very derogatory manner criticises the Bharadvāja and places him by the side of many non-Āryan tribes as the Suhmas, the Dardas, the Barbaras, etc. who also hold such view. The date of the Upaniṣad may be late[604] but it reflects the innate contempt of the orthodox seers for the Bharadvājas. On one hand this episode strengthens the solar theory, on the other it lends support to the view that in the later Vedic literature the priests of Pūṣan were looked down upon.

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[593] *R.V.*, I.43.10.

[594] Ibid., I.138.4.

[595] Ibid., I.138.3.

[596] Ibid., VI.56.1; cf. III.52.7.

[597] Max Müller (Ed.), op. cit., vol. 2, p. 845—*karambhātkarambhāṇāṁ ghritamiśrāṇāṁ yava sūktānāṁ.*

[598] *R.V.*, VI.57.2.

The acceptance of Pūṣan in the orthodox Āryan

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[599] *S.B.*, I.7.4.7; IV.2.5.22.

[600] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 157.

[601] *B.A.U.*, 1.4.13.

[602] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 35.

[603] Belvalker, S. K. & Ranade, R. D., *History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. II, p. 298.

[604] Belvalker and Ranade place it in the category of old Upaniṣads.

Society is indicated by his association with Indra in the *Rigveda*.[605] This compromise was made possible probably because of fundamental unity in the original nature of both the gods. Indra has got many solar features in his personality and it is quite probable that his role as the rain-maker and later on as the war-god was derived from the Sun.[606] It is significant to note that in the hymns of the sixth *maṇḍala* which appears to have been the original and main *maṇḍala* of his worship his food is contrasted with that of Indra.[607] While in the *Rigveda* itself at other places where the worship of Pūṣan is not the main theme and which from the point of view of date will come after the sixth *maṇḍala* Indra is said as sharing it with Pūṣan,[608] and in other passages[609] it applies to the libation of Indra. This shows that in the beginning Indra's association was only due to similarity in nature but due to the difference in the racial affiliation they were contrasted but with the passage of time these differences came to be removed as will appear from the sharing of this unusual food by Indra, though the innate feeling of hatred led the degradation of Pūṣan to the fourth order. Thus Pūṣan appears to us a solar deity in his capacity of prosperity which had two aspects—the production and the protection of cattles which were useful for agriculture as well as for trade as mediums of exchange. Secondly, trade and mercantile activities needed the safety of trade-routes. It was more needed because of disturbed conditions due to wars of the Āryans and the non-Āryans in the Vedic Age.[610] He was originally a non-Āryan deity connected with trading communities like *Paṇis*, whose ideal had always been affluency to which the god was capable of. There is no antecedent of Pūṣan in the Indo-European and the Indo-Irānian periods,[611] which also go to show that he was included in the Āryan pantheon only in India. This also strengthens the probability that he was a non-Āryan divinity.

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[605] *R.V.*, VI.55.5 calls Pūṣan as the brother of Indra—*bhrātendrasya sakhā mam*.

[606] See, Srivastava, V. C., A New Approach to the Personality of Rigvedic Indra, *J.A.H.R.S.*, vol. XXXI.

[607] *R.V.*, VI.57.2.

[608] Ibid., III.52.7.

[609] Ibid., III.52.1; VIII.80.2.

[610] Srivastava, B., op. cit., p. 16.

Pūṣan in The Later Vedic Literature:

Pūṣan's original nature as the god of prosperity which was derived from the Sun is maintained throughout the Vedic literature.[612] Yāska[613] explains Pūṣan as the Āditya—the popular name of the Sun-god, and as the preserver of all beings. In the post-Vedic literature[614] Pūṣan is accepted as a name of the Sun. His name meaning 'prosperor'[615] from the root √*puṣ*=to cause to thrive also supports his chief characteristic. Since the concept of prosperity in the Vedic times involved the growth of cattles and the protection of roads he came to be intimately connected with these two aspects also which he continued to possess throughout the Vedic literature. His connection with the marriage[616] is also derived from his prosperity aspect since the aim of the marriage is the procreation. There is no growth in his personality in the later Vedic literature except that in the Upaniṣads he has been spiritualized. He is regarded as the remover of the veil of ignorance and the revealer of the ultimate reality.[617] This change is probably due to the fact that his solar basis was not forgotten because in the Upaniṣads it is said that as the Sun is veiled by his rays similarly the ultimate reality is concealed in ignorance. It is only after crossing the rays that we can reach the Sun. Similarly the ultimate reality can be realized only when we have transcended the boundry of ignorance. In the Sūtras Pūṣan is invariably invoked in connection with journeys.[618] It also confirms the view that he was connected with carvan traders and merchants who had been undergoing frequent journeys. This feature came to be generalized and in the Sūtra-period Pūṣan came to be the god of safe journey and roads.[619] This aspect may have been derived from his guardianship of paths.

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[611] According to many scholars there is a marked similarity between him and Hermes so far as their nature is concerned. Collitz. *Hugo Pipping Comm. Volume,* 1924 quoted by Dandekar, *Progress,* p. 50, but it does not indicate any antecedent.

[612] *A.V.*, III.8.4; III.14.2; V.28.9; *S.B.*, III.1.4.9,14; IV.9.1.10; V.4.5.9; *K.B.*, XII.8.

[613] *N.*, 7.9.

[614] *Matsya P.*, Ch. 79; *Viṣṇu P.*, III.V.4; I.XV.17; *Vāyu P.*, XXXI.37; *Brahmāṇḍa P.*, II.13.125.

[615] Quoted by Dandekar, *N.I.A.*, vol. V, pp. 49—64.

[616] *R.V.*, X.85; V.37.

[617] B.A.U., V.15.1 *'Hiraṇyamayena patreṇa; Iśa U.*, 15,16; *Maitrī U.*, VI.35.

Like other gods Pūṣan has also been invoked in the *Rigveda* as the supreme god. He is prayer-instigating and devotion stimulating.[620] Such general ideas might have given occasion to later sectarians to utilize them for their own sectarian purposes.

F. VIVASVAT

Vivasvat—an unimportant god of the Vedic pantheon[621] may also be included in the list of the Sun-gods. Macdonell and many others[622] have seen solar features in his personality. But Oldenberg[623] finds the reasons for regarding him as a god of light insufficient and to him he is the first sacrificer, the ancestor of the human race, the Indian counterpart of the Indo-Irānian Vīvaṅhvant. Basing his thesis on the sacrificer-element in Vivasvat Bergaigne[624] is inclined to view him as a god of fire, though he admits that the Sun is a form of Agni. It is admitted that Vivasvat is connected with the first sacrifice and is described as the father of the human race several times in the Vedic literature.[625] But a pertinent question arises here whether this element is the original one or a derivation from some natural phenomenon. It may be confessed that there are a few descriptions of him in the *Rigveda* as well as in the later Vedic literature which go to show that originally he was the representative of the rising Sun. From this he appears to have derived the sacrificer-element. Before we dwell upon the descriptions showing his solar features it is desirable to remember that the Sun-god was regarded as the presiding deity of the dead in the Vedic literature.[626] In the Vedic mythology Yama—the god of the death, is explicitly referred to as the son of the Sun-god.[627] Moreover, in the cosmological speculation of the *Rigveda* one of the views was that the Sun is an important agent of generation.[628] In view of such beliefs it is quite natural for the Sun-god to be the first sacrificer and the father of the human race.[629] Therefore, there is no contradiction between Sun-god and a god of first sacrifice. The etymology and descriptions of Vivasvat clearly show that he is the Sun-god in his aspect of the first sacrificer. The day starts with the morning sacrifice. The world started from the primeaval sacrifice[630] and the rising Sun is the most befitting object to illustrate all these ideas.

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[618] *A.G.S.*, 3.7.8,9; *S.S.S.*, 3.4.9; *S.G.S.*, 2.14.9.

[619] Camel was employed as his symbol in later Vedic rituals which indicates that his connection with the path was not forgotten, *P.B.*, I.8—12.

[620] *R.V.*, VI.53.8; IX.88.3; II.40.6; cf. Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 36.

[621] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 43. The best evidence of his insignificance may be seen in the fact that not a single hymn of the *Rigveda* is ascribed to him. Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 113.

[622] Ibid., f.n. 5, 6 & 7. Keith, *R.P.V.U.*. p. 113.

[623] Op. cit., p. 122; *Z.D.M.G.*, vol. 49, 173; *S.B.E.*, 46, 392; cf. Bloomfield M., *J.A.O.S.*, vol. 15, pp. 176-77.

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[624] Op. cit., I.88; cf. Barth, A., op. cit., pp. 9-10.

[625] *R.V.*, X.17.1,2; X.14.5; X.63.1; *Vāl.*, 4.1; *T.S.*, 6.5,6.2; *S.B.*, 3.1.3.4; I.139.1. It is probably on this score that he has been invoked for expiation from the sin against parents in the *A.V.*, VI.116.

[626] *R.V.*, IX.113.9; X.107.2, 154.5; I.109.7; I.125.6; I.35.6; cf. *S.B.*, I.9.3.10.

[627] *R.V.*, X.14.5. Even in the *Rigveda*, I.163.2 Yama appears to be connected with the Sun.

[628] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 13; cf. *R.V.*, X.121.3.

[629] It is important to note that the Sun-god has been called as Prajāpati, *R.V.*, X.121.3. As pointed out by Macdonell, it is significant that in the only older passage of the *Rigveda* in which it occurs (IV.53.2) *Prajāpati* is an epithet of the solar deity-Savitri.

The etymology, *Vi*+√*Vas* meaning 'shining forth' clearly favours the solar theory. There cannot be any dispute to this etymology as this derivation occurs in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[631] where it is said that Āditya Vivasvat illumines (*Vi-vaste*) night and day. In the *Rigveda*[632] it is said that at the yoking of the Aśvins' car the daughter of the sky is born and also two bright days of Vivasvat. It is a clear description of the Sun-god. Vivasvat like Sūrya is married to Saraṇyū—the daughter of Tvaṣṭri[633] and has Yama as their son. Manu is also his son.[634] It has rightly been pointed out by Keith[635] that his connection with the Aśvins, Agni and Soma and the importance laid upon his seat can be explained by the theory that he is the Sun especially the rising Sun.

In the later Vedic literature Vivasvat is called an Āditya[636] and in the post Vedic literature this is a common name of the Sun-god.[637] In view of all these it is suggested that Vivasvat was the Sun-god in the Vedic literature. His antecedents go back to the Indo-Irānian period.

He is an object of worship on account of his preservation[638] but it is interesting to note that the malevolent side of his personality has also been exposed when it is said[639] that the worshippers of the Ādityas pray that the visible, the well-wrought arrow of Vivasvat may not slay them before the old age. This trait foreshadows the full-grown worship of the malevolent aspect of the Sun of the post-Rigvedic period.

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[630] *R.V.*, X.90.

[631] *S.B.*, X.5.2.4.

[632] *R.V.*, X.39.12—*ubhe ahanī Sudine Vivasvataḥ* cf. *S.B.*, X.5.2.4.

[633] *R.V.*, X.17.1.

[634] Ibid., VIII.52.1.

[635] Op. cit., p. 113.

[636] *T.S.*, VI.5.6; *M.S.*, 1.6.12.

[637] Rai, S. N., *Paurāṇik Dharma evaṁ Samāja*, p. 51.

[638] *R.V.*, X.65.6; *A.V.*, XVIII.3.62.

[639] *R.V.*, VIII.67.20; cf. *A.V.*, XIX.9.7.

G. THE ĀDITYAS

The Ādityas form a group of divinities whose nature is extremely uncertain in the *Rigveda*, though in the later literature they are definitely solar gods. They have been taken by scholars as invisible, imperishable, eternal beings who dwell in the celestial light,[640] the earliest name invented to express the infinite, the immortal divine,[641] the light of the day in its boundlessness and imperishability,[642] the gods of celestial light without representing any particular manifestation of that light,[643] or representatives of the cosmic aspect of the Sun.[644] The theory of Oldenberg revived by Geiger regards them as the sun, the moon and five planets and relates them to the Indo-Irānian Ameṣa-spentas.[645]

The theory of Oldenberg has been criticised and no one takes it seriously now.[646] The other theories giving a higher metaphysical substratum to the Ādityas ignore the essential characteristic of the Rigvedic religion i.e. the child-like faith in the nature-worship.[647] Moreover, most of these theories concern themselves with the nature of Aditi.

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[640] Roth, R., *Z.D.M.G.*, vol. VI. p. 68.

[641] Max Müller, *S.B.E.*, vol. 32, pp. 252—54. Ragozin, op. cit., p. 153 also takes them as representatives of infinity.

[642] Hillebrandt, op. cit., III, pp. 106—8.

[643] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 44.

[644] Renou, L., op. cit., p. 60; Barth, op. cit., p. 19 also takes them as part of the solar divinities.

[645] Op. cit., pp. 185—89; Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 102 and Griswold, op. cit., pp. 144-45 follow Oldenberg.

[646] Macdonell, *V.M.*, pp. 44—46; P. S. Deshmukh, op. cit., pp. 230-31.

[647] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 2.

No doubt the Ādityas are the sons of Aditi but it is not necessary that the sons must have the character of their mother.

Features of The Ādityas:

The features of the Ādityas in the *Rigveda* may throw light on their original nature. The features of the Ādityas in the later Vedic as well as the post-Vedic literature should also be taken into consideration while discussing the position.

In the *Rigveda* many epithets have been applied to them which show their connection with light. These epithets are *sucayaḥ, hiraṇyaḥ, animiṣaḥ, dīrghadhiyaḥ* and *bhūryakṣaḥ*.[648] Similar epithets are applied to Sūrya[649] also and other solar gods as Savitri[650] and Mitra.[651] They uphold and preserve things both moving and stationary[652]—a description which has also been applied to Sūrya in the *Rigveda*.[653]

Once the name Āditya has been used for the rising sun in the *Rigveda*.[654] Thus as early as the *Rigveda* the notion has emerged that one of the Ādityas is Sūrya. It shows that the original basis of the Ādityas may have been the Sun. In the later Vedic period the solar nature of the Ādityas becomes more explicit. At many occasions,[655] the name Āditya has been used for the Sun-god. Moreover, the twelve Ādityas of later Vedic literature have been identified with the twelve months.[656] The concept of Sūrya as the Time is a very prominent feature of the Vedic mythology[657] as well as of other ancient mythologies.[658] The identification of the Ādityas with the time and its divisions is definitely in favour of their solar origin. In many rituals of the Vedic times Āditya is used as a name of the Sun-god.[659] No difference has been made between Āditya and Sūrya in the Vedic rituals. It is interesting to note that in rituals[660] the name of the god invoked is Āditya and the hymn that is enjoined to be recited is that of Sūrya. In the post-Vedic literature the twelve Ādityas become regular Sun-gods.[661] In view of these facts it is safe to view the Ādityas as the Sun-gods from the very beginning. Other ideas associated with them may have been derived from this original basis. The moral role assigned to the Ādityas in the *Rigveda*[662] is easily derivable from the solar gods as they[663] are also given a moral and ethical role such as the removal of evil influences and expiation from

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[648] *R.V.*, II.27.

[649] Ibid., VII.35.8; X.37.1; I.50.2.

[650] Ibid., I.25.8,9,10; X.139.1.

[651] Ibid., VII.60.6.

[652] Ibid., II.27.4—*Devā viśvasya bhuvanasya gopāḥ.*

[653] Ibid., VII.60.2—*Viśvasya sthāturjagataśca gopā;* cf. *R.V.*, VII.66.15; I.115.1.

[654] Ibid., I.50.13—*udagādayamādityo.*

[655] *A.V.*, II.32. Here the rising Sun has been named as Āditya and according to *Kauśika Sūtra*, XXVII.21—24 this ceremony for killing worms is to be performed at sun-rise, noon and sun-set. cf. *R.V.*, I.191.8,9. See, Shende, N.J., op. cit., p. 311. Āditya when used in singular is a term for the Sun. cf. *T.S.*, IV.2.10. The solar nature of Āditya is clear when he is invoked not to harm the enemy with his heat. He, like Sūrya, is invoked to give a life of 100 years. In *A.B.*,

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IV.8 Āditya has been identified with the Sun. Āditya is a recognized name of the Sun-god in the Upaniṣads, *B.A.U.*, II.2.2; *Maitrī U.*, VI.35; There is a reference to the worship of the Sun-god in the name of *Āditya* by Śvetaketu Aruṇeya, *S.B.*, XI.6.2.2.

[656] *P.B.*, X.1.10; *S.B.*, VI.1.2.8; IX.6.3.8; IV.5.7.2; XI.6.3.5; VII.5.2.17; VIII.5.2.8; X.5.4.15; XII.1.3.5; *B.A.U.*, III.9.5—'*dvādaśavai māsāḥ Saṁvatsarasyait Ādityā; S.G.S.*, II.14.8.

[657] *R.V.*, I.164.48; *B.A.U.*, I.2.7; *S.B.*, X.2.4.3; II.2.3.9.

[658] Frank Cumont., *Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and Romans*, pp. 107ff.

[659] *S.G.S.*, II.3; *K.G.S.*, II.4.14; *G.G.S.*, II.10.27; *S.G.S.*, III.8.7; IV.11.2; *P.G.S.*, II.6.15; See, Apte, *V.M.*, op. cit.

[660] *S.G.S.*, III.8.7. Here the god invoked is Āditya and the hymn to be recited is *R.V.*, VII.66.16 which is meant for the Sun. Such examples may be multiplied.

[661] Rai, S. N., op. cit., pp. 47—53.

[662] *R.V.*, II.27.3,4; VIII.18.15; II.29.5; cf. *T.S.*, IV.2.1; I.5.9.

[663] *R.V.*, X.85.1; VII.60.1; 62.2; I.115.6; VI.51.2; cf. *S.G.S.*, VI.3.4—6; *K.U.*, II.7; *T.U.*, I.10.1.

the Sun. The ideas of boundlessness of space given to this group may have been derived from the apparent boundlessness of the luminous sky. The idea of immortality might have been derived from the eternal life of the Sun and the idea of freedom from sin appears to have been taken from the daily observance of the cosmic order—*rita* by the Sun.[664]

Names and Number of Ādityas:

The names and number of the Ādityas are uncertain in the *Rigveda*. Originally they appear to have been six only—Mitra, Aryamān, Bhaga, Varuṇa, Dakṣa, and Aṁśa[665] but the number increased from six to seven[666] by the inclusion of Sūrya[667] and to eight by the entry of Mārtāṅḍa.[668] By the time of the completion of the *Rigveda* the number has come to be fixed at eight as such references occur in the later *manḍalas*. This tradition is continued in the later Vedic literature.[669] At one place the eight names of the Ādityas are enumerated[670] as Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryamān, Aṁśa, Bhaga, Dhatri, Indra and Vivasvat.[671] First five in this list are common with those of the list of the *Rigveda*. It appears that in place of Sūrya Vivasvat has been included while Indra and Dhatri are new entrants. It should not be forgotten that Indra has also been given the name of Āditya in the *Rigveda* though like Sūrya he is not enumerated along with the Ādityas.[672] While the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* definitely includes Mārtaṅḍa in the list of eight Ādityas, the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* omits the name. It shows that due to different traditions there has been difference in the lists of the Ādityas. The number swelled to twelve in the *Śatapatha*

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[664] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, *p.* 83.

[665] *R.V.*, II.27.1.

[666] Ibid., IX.114.3.

[667] Ibid., I.50.13; I.191.9; cf. *A.B.*, IV.8.

[668] Ibid., X.72.8,9.

[669] *A.V.*, VIII.9.21; *T.S.*, VI.5.6.

[670] *T.B.*, I.1.9.1.

[671] Sāyaṇa on *R.V.*, II.27.1 quotes this list.

[672] *R.V.*, VII.85.4; *Vāl.*, 4.7; *T.S.*, I.4.22 brands Indra as the fourth Āditya.

Brāhmaṇa.[673] They have been identified with the twelve months but their names have not been enumerated. Savitri who is included in the list of the Ādityas in the post-Vedic period is referred to as Āditya in the *Rigveda*[674] but it cannot be definitely said whether he was a member of the group in this early age.

Mitra:

The solar nature of Mitra—one of the Ādityas has already been discussed in the preceding pages.

Aryamān:

Aryamān, who lacks individuality in the *Rigveda,*[675] has been taken as a god of solar origin[676] though others take him as a god of marriage[677] or as a personification of the membership of the Āryan community or the milky way.[678] The theory of his solar origin appears to be a reasonable one in view of the support that it gets from the Indian tradition[679] and his friendly nature[680] which resembles Mitra—the Sun-god. In the *Atharvaveda* the friendly nature of Aryamān is maintained.[681] His connection with the marriage[682] may be explained on the ground that other Sun-gods are also associated with the marriage-ritual in the Vedic literature.[683]

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[673] *S.B.*, VI.1.2.8; II.6.3.8.

[674] *R.V.*, VII.85.4; VII.18.3.

[675] Roth, R., *Z.D.M.G.*, vol. 6, p. 74; Hardy, E., op. cit., pp. 55-56. He lacks so much individuality that he has been passed in silence by the *Naighuṇṭaka.*

[676] Hardy, op. cit., pp. 55-56.

[677] Renou, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

[678] Weber, *Festgruss on Roth,* p. 138; *Rājasūya,* pp. 84, n. 2.

[679] Śayaṇa on *S.B.*, V.3.1.2.

[680] *R.V.*, V.85.7.

[681] *A.V.*, I.11.1; I.18.2; III.20.3.

[682] *R.V.*, V.3.2; *A.V.*, II.36.2. In *T.S.*, II.3.4 Aryamān has been directly identified with the Sun. cf. *K.S.*, XI.4; *M.S.*, II.2.4; *B.S.S.* XIII.27.

[683] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 51. Sūryā-hymn of the *R.V.* is probably responsible for this role of the Sun-gods.

His name is Indo-Irānian and may be even related to the Irish ancestor—Airem.[684]

Bhaga:

Bhaga is another Āditya in whom solar features have been seen,[685] though many scholars are opposed[686] to it. He appears to have been the Sun-god in his aspect of prosperity. He is connected in a distinctive way with Savitri[687]—a solar god. It is expressly said that Bhaga's eye is adorned with rays[688] and hymns rise upto Viṣṇu on Bhaga's path.[689] Yāska[690] seems to favour his solar origin when he describes him as presiding over the forenoon.[691] The name means dispenser or giver and is of Indo-European origin. In view of the fact that it becomes one of the names of the Sun-god in the post-Vedic period[692] it is natural to suggest that originally also he must have got solar features.

Aṁśa:

Aṁśa, occuring less than a dozen times in the *Rigveda* is almost synonymous with Bhaga expressing both the concrete sense of share, portion and that of apportioner.[693]

Dakṣa:

Dakṣa was regarded with Aditi as the universal parent

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684. Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 99.
685. Wallis, op. cit., p. 11.
686. Hillebrandt, op. cit., III.93; Hopkins. op. cit., p. 53ff.
687. Grassmann, *Worterbuch*, S. V. Bhaga quoted by Macdonell, op. cit., p. 47.
688. *R.V.*, I.136.2.
689. Ibid., III.54.14.
690. *N.*, XII.13.
691. In *A.V.*, III.16.3 Bhaga is invoked in his character of the early Sun overpowering Uṣas.
692. Rai, S. N.. op. cit., p. 48.
693. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 45.

representing the luminous sky.[694] It fits in with his description as Prajāpati.[695]

Other Ādityas:

Similarly Varuṇa—the chief of the Ādityas in the Vedic literature appears to be a representative of the luminous encompassing sky[696] although a few scholars as K. C. Chattopadhya[697] regard him as the nocturnal Sun. Sūrya—the seventh Āditya has already been described. Mārtāṇḍa, the eighth Āditya has not been given any feature except that he was born from a dead egg and was thrown away by Aditi. In the later Vedic literature[698] Mārtāṇḍa is a name of the Sun-god.[699] On that basis and on whatever little is said of him in the *Rigveda* it is suggested that he represents the setting Sun.[700]

H. AŚVINS

The twin Aśvins are among the most 'opaque' of all the Rigvedic gods.[701] In this respect they are like Indra and Varuṇa. The result is that there are wide differences of opinion regarding their physical basis which has been a puzzle to the Vedic interpreters from the earliest times.[702] Yāska himself was not very sure about their original basis and therefore quoted alternative views held by his predecessors. According to him[703] some regarded them as the heaven and the earth; others as the day and the night; others as the sun and the moon while the legendary writers or writers of history took them to be two kings, performers of holy acts.

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[694] *R.V.*, X.72.4.5; X.5.7.

[695] *S.B.*, 2.4.4.2.

[696] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, pp. 96—98.

[697] Quoted by G. C. Pande, *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*, p. 268; cf. Sāyaṇa's remark on *R.V.*, VII.87.1 *astaṁ Gacchan Sūrya eva Varuṇa iti ucayate* favours it.

[698] *R.V.*, X.79.8.19; cf. *T.S.*, VI.5.6.

[699] Rai, S. N., op. cit., p. 53.

[700] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 44.

[701] See, Srivastava, V.C., The Aśvins in the *Rigveda*, *J.A.H.R.S.*, vol. 30.

[702] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 49. Hopkins, op. cit., p. 80; Cox, *The Mythology of the Āryan Nations*, p. 206; Shamasastri, The Aśvins, *Q.J.M.S.*, vol. XX, pp. 80—88.

Analysis of Different Theories:

Yāska himself is inclined to view the Aśvins as the twilight before dawn—half dark, half light. Roth[704] on the strength of the above passage took Yāska as identifying the Aśvins with the Sun and Indra. But Goldstucker[705] thinks that the passage on which Roth relied does not bear out this conclusion. It is the opinion of Yāska, he suggests, that the Aśvins represent the transition from darkness to light when the intermingling of both produces that inseparable duality which is expressed by the twin nature of these deities. This view is shared by Myriantheus,[706] Ragozin[707] and Hopkins.[708] They also took them as the inseparable twins, the twilights or twilight before dawn, half dark and half bright so that only one of them could be spoken of as the son of bright sky. This theory is open to criticism on the ground that there is no specific natural phenomenon behind it. The conception of twilight is so general and vague that it is not natural for that early age to evolve a god centering round this insignificant phenomenon. Oldenberg[709] following Mannhardt,[710] and Bollenson[711] believes that the natural basis of the Aśvins must be the morning star, that being the only morning light besides the fire, the dawn and the Sun and this identification agrees according to him with what little information is available of the Lettic sons of God and the Greek Dioskouroi.[712] But this theory is defective in the sense that it ignores the inseparable duality of the Aśvins.[713] If we try to overcome this difficulty by taking the evening star in this connection, then other problems follow such as both the stars are separate, as only one is seen at a time and as during certain periods one of them is absent.[714] Moreover, it is not definite whether the Aśvins had Indo-European antecedents in the Dioskouroi or Lettic sons of Gods and the validity of the theory should not be based upon this dubious argument. Weber's theory[715] that they are to be taken as the twin stars of Gemini, is open to the fatal objection that 'there is nothing but the twin nature to commend it.'[716]

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[703] *N.*, XII.1—*Dyāvāprithivyāvityeke| ahorātrāv ityeke| Sūryācandramsāvityeke| rājānau puṇyakritāvitai tihāsikaḥ.*

[704] Roth, R., *Z.D.M.G.*, vol. IV, pp. 425ff.

[705] Goldstucker—Quoted by Muir, J., op. cit., vol. V., p. 256. Durgā—the Commentator of *Yāska* (*I.O.L.*, No. 206) does not attribute to the latter the view which Roth ascribes to him.

[706] See, *Die Aśvins Oder Arischen Dioskuren, Munich*, 1876.

[707] Ragozin, op. cit., p. 231.

[708] Hopkins, op. cit., p. 82.

[709] *O.R.V.*, pp. 207—15; Guntert also believes in it.

[710] Quoted by Macdonell, op. cit., p. 53.

[711] *Z.D.M.G.*, vol. XLI, p. 496.

Max Müller[717] regards the Aśvins as the morning and the evening. But these phenomena are separate. Moreover many descriptions of them given in the *Rigveda*[718] cannot be explained on this theory. The theory which interprets them as the heaven and the earth[719] is open to many objections[720] such as these—the luminous character of the Aśvins, their red path, their time of appearance and their succouring power. Geldner's[721] theory, though supported by a predesessor of Yāska, that the Aśvins do not represent any natural phenomenon but are simply succouring saints of purely Indian origin, is open to various serious objections.[722] A really genuine objection against the view of Geldner is that it is against the clear natural background of the Vedic religion. Further, the Aśvins are included in the list of celestial deities and not in the list of saints and priests of the *Rigveda*. Bergaigne[723] considers them as the fire of heaven and the fire of the altar. But they are gods of celestial region and inseparability is not found between the fire of heaven and that of the altar.

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[712] *V.M.*, p. 54 and Bloomfield, op. cit., pp. 113-14 are inclined to accept the view.

[713] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 118; cf. *R.V.*, V. 78.1,2.

[714] Hillebrandt, op. cit., III. p. 385.

[715] Weber, A., *Rājasūya*, p. 100. Hellebrandt wonders as to why these two stars only were raised to godhood.

[716] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 118.

[717] *Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 205.

[718] The time of their appearance is described in the *Rigveda* as the early dawn. cf. X.61.4; I.22.2; VIII.9.17. They have a red or golden path *rudravartani or hiraṇyavartani*, *R.V.*, VIII.22.1, 14. All these go against Max Müller's theory.

[719] cf. *S.B.*, IV.1.5.16.

[720] Muir, J., op. cit., p. 255.

Some of the more improbable opinions are that they represent the morning and evening wind[724] or rain-giving and dew-giving deities.[725] The sun and the moon theory for the Aśvins has been accepted by Ludwig,[726] Hillebrandt,[727] Hardy[728] and Śnamasastri.[729] But the inseparable duality can not be explained on this theory also as the sun and the moon are quite separate phenomena. Moreover if the sun is united with the moon, it would be lowering the high position of the sun to that of moon, which occupied but a small place in the Indo-European as well as in the Indian mythology.[730] Like Weber Ekendra Nath Ghosh[731] propounded the theory that the Aśvins are the two stars—Alpha and Beta Arietes of the constellation of Aśvinī. The arguments levelled against Weber's theory may be brought against his theory also. Ghosh argues that the three sides of Aśvins' chariot can be explained only on this theory because the chariot represents the triangular figure formed by the three stars of the constellation Bharaṇī lying behind the twin stars of constellation Aśvinī. A simpler explanation for the triple aspect of their chariot has been given i.e. the third seat was due to the fact that there was a third rider in Sūryā. Moreover, Sūrya has three spheres and the three wheels may represent the three regions of the universe which the Sun traverses everyday. Further, number three is sacred and traditional in the *Rigveda* and triads are often found in the *Rigveda*.

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[721] *Vedische Studien*, vol. II, p. 31; Harris, *The Cult of the Heavenly Twins*, 1906 thinks that the twins are often given a divine origin without there being any myth of nature involved. As pointed out by Keith, op. cit., p. 118 this theory has no special plausibility for Indian religion in which the natural background is clear.

[722] Keith's (*R.P.V.U.*, p. 116) objection that this view is clearly based upon a false effort to dissociate Indian from Indo-European mythology is not so sound as it is still doubtful whether the Aśvins have any Indo-European connections.

[723] Bergaigne, op. cit., II, pp. 508-9.

[724] Brunhofer, *Iran und Turan*, p. 99.

[725] Vodoskov Quoted by Hillebrandt, op. cit., vol. III, p. 389.

[726] Ludwig, op. cit., III, p. 34.

[727] Hillebrandt, op. cit., III, pp. 379—96.

[728] Hardy, op. cit., pp. 47—49.

[729] Shamasastri, R., The Aśvins, *Q.J.M.S.*, vol. XX, pp. 80—88.

V. H. Vader[732] came to a different conclusion on the basis of Tilak's theory of the Arctic home. To him it is possible to identify the dual divinity with the popular phenomenon known in astronomy as the Zodiacal light and the Gegenschiui. But this theory is based upon a very controversial ground. Tilak's theory has been put to severe criticism. The above survey reveals that the original nature of the Aśvins is still an open question demanding historical investigation and research.

Features of the Aśvins:

The characteristic features of the Aśvins in the *Rigveda* supported by the later Vedic data may throw light on this question. The most marked feature is that the Aśvins are twins and inseparable generally[733] though in a few hymns they are described originally as separate.[734] Their theophanic moment is morning[735] though they are invoked to come at the noon and the sunset[736] also. Their connection with honey is quite close and is mentioned quite frequently in the *Rigveda.*[737] They are associated with horses too often[738] and their very name is a pointer in this direction.[739] Their car is sunlike,[740] golden[741] having three wheels,[742] three fellies and some other parts triple. Their locality is mostly described as heaven[743] and they have been included in the list of celestial gods. They are children of heaven,[744] the twin sons of Vivasvat and Saraṇyū-Tvaṣṭri's daughter.[745] They are closely connected with Sūrya who accompanies them on their car.[746] They are invoked to

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[730] Deshmukh, P. S., op. cit., p. 242.

[731] Twin Gods-Aśvins of the *Rigveda*, *I.H.Q.*, vol. VI, pp. 172–75.

[732] Vader, V. H., The Twin gods Aśvinau, *I.H.Q.*, vol. VIII, pp. 272–78.

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733. *R.V.*, III.39.3; X.17.2; II.39.2,3,4,5. In the last hymn the Aśvins have been compared with pairs of different types a number of times. cf., V.78.1.3; VIII.35.7,9; X.106.2–10.

734. Ibid., V.73.4; *nānājātā;* I.181.4.

735. Ibid., X.61.4—*Kriṣṇā yadgoṣvaruṇīṣu sīdad divo napātāśvinā huve vāṁ;* I.22.2; VIII.9.17; VIII.5.2; X.39.12; I.34.10; I.157.1; VII.72.4.

736. Ibid., V.76.3; VIII.22.14.

737. *R.V.*, IV.45.3,4; I.117. 6; I.122.3; I.157.4; X.41.3; I.112.21; X.106.10. They are described as drinking Soma also. VIII.35.1–10.2.2; III.58.6.9; Hillebrandt (*V.M.*, I. 241) thinks that at first they were excluded from the circle of the Soma-drinking gods. It is contradicted by such references occurring in the family books.

738. Ibid., V.76.3; VIII.22.14; I.117.2.4; I.181.2.

739. The name implies the 'possession of horses'; cf. *V.M.*, p. 50.

740. *R.V.*, VIII.8.2.

741. Ibid., IV.44.4,5; I.180.1; I.119.1; VIII.8.11, 14; VII .5.29.

742. Ibid., I.118.1,2.

743. Ibid., VIII.8.7; I.44.5; VIII.10.1; VIII.26.17.

744. Ibid., I.182.1; 184.1; X.61.4.

745. Ibid., X.17.2.

746. Ibid., IV.43.6; I.119.5; VII.69.4; V.73.5; VIII.8.10; I.34.5; I.116; I.117; I.118.5; VI.63.5; VIII.22.5.

convey the bride home[747] and are also connected with fertility.[748] They are typically succouring divinities[749] and they are in close touch with human beings. They are adorned with lotus-garland.[750]

The Aśvins and the Solar Theory:

In the light of the above traits of the Aśvins it is suggested that they represent the light-giving and the fertility-producing aspects of the Sun, both being so important for life that they came to be regarded as two deities. But as their physical substratum is the same they are grouped together as inseparabe. It is only due to this fact that only one of the two Aśvins is said to be connected with the luminous sky, dawn and light[751] wihle the other is associated with the night as it has also been pointed out by Yāska.[752] The fertility aspect is well brought out by this connection of one of the two with night—the time best suited and prescribed by the *śāstras* for procreation. At many places both the aspects have been mentioned. It is said that they are invoked in the last watch of the night and it is prayed that they may increase food for us.[753] In a very significant reference their union is compared with that of the shining day and dewy night.[754] Here both the aspects—light-giving and fertility-producing of the Sun are clearly brought out. At another place[755] it is prayed that the Aśvins may provide us with wholesome food after dispersing the darkness.[756]

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[747] *R.V.*, X.85.26.

[748] Ibid., X.184.2; I.112.3.

[749] Macdonell, *V.M.*, pp. 51–53.

[750] *R.V.*, X.184.2—'*garbhaṁ te Aśvinau devā vā dhattāṁ puṣkarsrijā*'; *A.V.*, III.22.4; *S.B.*, IV.1.5.16; *T.S.*, V.3.1 as physicians of gods.

[751] *R.V.*, I.181.4.

[752] *N.*, 12.2.

[753] *R.V.*, I.112.24—'*adyutyeavase ni Hvye vāṁ Vridhe ca no bhavataṁ vājasātao.*

[754] Ibid., I.34.1—*Vibhurvā yāma uta rātiraśvinā.*

[755] Ibid., I.46.6—*Yā naḥ piparadaśvinā jyotiṣmatī tamastiraḥ tāmasme rāsāthāmiṣaṁ.*

There are descriptions in the *Rigveda* which clearly reveal that the Aśvins are gods of celestial light—the best representative of which is the sun.

Theophanic Moment of the Aśvins:

The time of their appearance is properly the early dawn[757] when they yoke their horses to their car and descend to earth to receive the adorations and offerings of their votaries. They have been asked to unite with the dawn.[758] It is specifically said that the morning sacrifice is meant for them.[759] The evening sacrifice is not acceptable to them. They are connected with the light. When Uṣas scatters darkness from the sky the Aśvins are praised.[760]

On one occasion[761] the Aśvins appear to be invoked as light which is seen in front of Uṣas springing up for the illumination of all things and because of their presence even the remotest ends of darkness have been seen. The description is clearly that of the Sun in its light-giving faculty. The light-producing work of the Sun is assigned to the Aśvins throughout the *Rigveda*. It is said that they make known all the paths of the sun.[762] It is further said that with their aid we cross over the darkness.[763] One of their wheels illumines the form of the sun, the other regulates the ages of the mankind.[764] At another place[765] they have been referred to as following Uṣas, the dawn which is quite natural for the Sun-god.

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[756] Sāyaṇa has interpreted *'tamastiraḥ'* in a figurative sense of removing the darkness of poverty. I fail to understand as to why the word is to be understood in a figurative sense and not in its direct form when directly it speaks sense. It is well known that no food can be produced in the absence of light. Hence a prayer for food is naturally connected with the removal of darkness. Thus both the aspects of the Aśvins—the light—giving and the fertility-producing—are expressed in the above reference.

[757] *R.V.*, I.157.1; I.46.4; I.184.1; II.39.2; III.158.1,4; V.76.1, V.77.12; VII.69.5; VII.71.1; VII.72.4; VII.73.1.

[758] Ibid., I.183.2.

[759] Ibid., I.22.1, it uses the word—*'prāturyujā'*, cf. *R.V.*, I.180.1.

[760] Ibid., I.46.1.

[761] Ibid., VII.67.2,3.

At dawn they scatter the investing glooms to the ends of the earth.[766] In a hymn they are united with Uṣā and Sūrya in a characteristic way.[767]

They are associated with the morning in the *Rig-veda*[768] as well as in the later Vedic literature.[769] They are the bringers of the day.[770]

It is said that the Aśvins come to us in a well-constructed car with the rays of the sun.[771] At many occasion the morning divinities of light are invoked simultaneously and the Aśvins are included in the group but sometimes Sūrya—the Sun is conspicuous by his absence in the group. It is probably because of the fact that one aspect of the Aśvins is connected with the morning sun and therefore no necessity was felt in the presence of the Aśvins to invoke Sūrya also. Savitri sets Aśvins' shining car in motion before the dawn.[772]

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[762] *R.V.*, IV.45.6.

[763] Ibid., I.183.6; I.184.6.

[764] Ibid., V.73.3.

[765] Ibid., VIII.5.1,2.

[766] Ibid., VI.62.1.

[767] Ibid., VIII.35.1–21 *Sajoṣasā uṣasā Sūryeṇa.* cf. *R.V.*, X.107. 1,3.

[768] Ibid., X.39.12.

[769] *A.B.*, II.15.

[770] *R.V.*, VIII.5.9,21.

[771] Ibid., I.47.7—*ato rathena subritā na āgataṁ sākaṁ Sūryasya raśmibhiḥ.*

[772] Ibid., I.34.10.

In other passages[773] there is a congregation of solar divinities of morning such as Agni, Uṣā, Savitri, Sūrya and the Aśvins. In view of the fact that the Aśvins are not only the gods of light but also the gods of fertility, therefore they are mentioned independently also along with Sūrya and other Sun-gods. His inclusion in this list indicates his solar nature. Moreover, both the break of dawn and the appearance of the Aśvins appear to be made simultaneous with the rising of the sun in the *Rigveda*.

Epithets of the Aśvins:

There is one peculiar characteristic of the solar deities in the *Rigveda* which appear to be contradictory. They are young as well as ancient because the sun rises daily and exists from time immemorial. The same feature has been given to the Aśvins when they are said to be young[774] (*yuvānā*) and ancient[775] (*pratnā*). The light-aspect of the sun is clearly discernible in the personality of the Aśvins from many epithets given to them such as *śubhaspatī* (lord of lustre),[776] *śubhra* (bright)[777] and *hiraṇyapeśasā* (of golden briliancy).[778] They have long arms and outstretched hands.[779]

The swift aspect of the sun is well brought out in these descriptions of the Aśvins when they are said to be swift as young falcons,[780] agile (*nritū*),[781] and fleet as thought.[782] Likewise Sūrya and other solar gods are many times called swift birds swifter than thought.

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[773] *R.V.*, I.157.1; VII.72.4.

[774] Ibid., VII.67.10.

[775] Ibid., VI.62.5.

[776] Ibid., X.93.6; I.3.1; I.34.6; VIII.22.4; I.47.5.

[777] Ibid., VII.68.1.

[778] Ibid., VIII.8.2.

[779] Ibid., I.3.1.

[780] Ibid., V.78.4.

[781] Ibid., VI.63.5.

[782] Ibid., VIII.22.16; I.183.1.

The attribute *'rudravartanī'*[783] (having a red path) is peculiar to the Aśvins and they are the only gods called *hiraṇyavartanī*[784] (golden pathed). These peculiar epithets reveal the light-aspect of the Aśvins' personality. The close connection of the Aśvins[785] with horses as their name implies as well as other descriptions tell us is again a pointer in the same direction. Horses are symbols of solar rays in the Rigvedic, later Vedic and the post-Vedic mythologies. Even in the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice the horse is regarded as the symbol of the Sun.[786]

The Car of The Aśvins:

The car of the Aśvins[787] is just like that of Sūrya and Uṣā in colour and activities with one exception i.e. this has got three wheels, three fellies[788] etc. From this many scholars[789] have tried to identify them with certain stars. The twin stars of Aśvinī and Bharaṇī are not so prominent as to evoke so much worship as is given to the Aśvins who are only next to Indra, Agni, and Soma in the *Rigveda*. Other interesting defects of this type of explanations may be pointed out. Most of the features except the triad aspect of the Aśvins' chariot remain unexplained. There is no apparent or inherent connection of these stars with the swift motion, with the healing activities etc. as are intrinsic to the Aśvins' personality. Three simple explanations may be suggested for the triple aspect of their car.

Firstly, the number three might be just traditional as is often the case in the *Rigveda*.[790] In the case of the Aśvins they are fancifully represented as doing a variety of acts thrice over.[791] Secondly, the sun has been given three spheres—celestial, atmospheric and terrestrial, hence there are three wheels. But the most simple explanation appears to be that when Sūryā also came to sit in their car a third wheel was supplied to give support to the third rider. It is described in the *Rigveda* that before Sūryā came to sit there were only two wheels.[792] This explanation is in harmony with the child-like naivety of the Rigvedic mythology.

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[783] *R.V.*, I.3.3–Sāyaṇa interprets it as those who make the enemy weep.

[784] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 49.

[785] *R.V.*, I.30.17 shows their connection with the steeds.

[786] Renou, op. cit., p. 109.

[787] *R.V.*, I.22.2; I.30.18.

[788] Ibid., I.34.2,5,9; I.47.2; I.157.3; I.183.1.

[789] Ghosh, E.N., op. cit., pp. 172–75.

[790] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 19.

The other characteristics of the Aśvins' chariot can be explained satisfactorily on the solar basis. The car is golden or sun-like[793] in all its various parts and appurtenances, wheels, fellies, axle, pole, reins, etc. The repetition of the word *hiraṇya* in this connection reminds us of the golden deity—Savitri—another Sun-god. Their car is the associator of solar rays.[794] The car touches the ends of heaven and extends over the five countries[795]—a description which is applicable only to the sun which along with its rays touches the farthest ends of heaven and earth within no time. Clearer than this is the description that it traverses heaven and earth in a single day[796] as the cars of the

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[791] *R.V.,* I.34.1.2,5 such as to move thrice by night thrice by day, to bestow nourishment thrice at evening and at dawn, to bestow wealth thrice, to aid the devotions of the worshippers thrice, to bestow celestial medicament thrice and earthly thrice. It is suggested by Sāyaṇa that by the number three the allusion is made either to the three diurnal sacrifice, at dawn, mid-day and sunset, or to the faculty of all divinities of being *tripathagāḥ* 'going equally through the heavens, the firmament and the earth'.

[792] *R.V.,* X.85.11,12,15.

[793] Ibid., I.180.1—*hiraṇyayā vāṁ pavayaḥ*; I.182.2; IV.44.4,5—*hiraṇyena-rathena*; V.77.3; VIII.5.28 *rathaṁ hiraṇyavandhuraṁ hiraṇyābhiśuṁ Aśvinā, ā hi sthātho divispriśaṁ*, 29—*hiraṇyayī vāṁ rabhirīṣā akṣo hiraṇyayaḥ ubhā cakrā hiraṇyayā;* VIII.5.35—*Hiraṇyena rathena;* VIII.8.2—*rathena Sūryatvacā;* cf. I.47.9.

[794] Ibid., IV.44.1; IV.45.1; VIII.8.2.

[795] Ibid., I.46.3; IV.43.5.

[796] Ibid., III.58.8.

Sun[797] and Uṣā are also said to do. Similarly their chariot is said as scattering the surrounding darkness as the sun and as spreading bright radiance over the firmament.[798]

Other Connections:

It is no surprise if the Aśvins are described as sons of Vivasvat[799]—the solar divinity and Saraṇyū—the rising sun or dawn. Moreover, the locality of the Aśvins which is variously described is also indicative of his solar basis. Like all-pervading Sūrya Aśvins pervade and live in air,[800] heaven,[801] earth,[802] mountains,[803] plants and houses and come from far and near. They are once said to have three places.[804] It has been suggested[805] that possibly it is because they are invoked thrice a day. But to us it appears that they have been given three places because the Sun has been given three births—in the heaven, the atmosphere and the earth.

The Aśvins are essentially solar divinities of morning but they are invoked occasionally at mid-day and sun-set[806] also and are connected with sacrifices of these times, especially because theophanic moments of the Sun are three—the rise, the climax and the setting. The three strides of Viṣṇu are just like the three times of the Aśvins.

The Aśvins and The Fertility:

The connection of the Aśvins with Sūryā[807] is just symbolic of their other aspect, the production—side of the Sun.

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[797] *R.V.*, I.115.3.

[798] Ibid., IV.45.2.

[799] Ibid., IX.17.2.

[800] Ibid., VIII.8.4, 9.2.

[801] Ibid., VIII.8.7.

[802] Ibid., I.44.5; VII.10.1.

[803] Ibid., VII.70.3.

[804] Ibid., VIII.8.23.

[805] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 50.

[806] *R.V.*, V.70.3.

[807] Ibid., IV.43.6; I.119.5; VII.69.4; V.73.5; VIII.8.10; I.34.5; I.116,117,118.5; VIII.63.5; IV.43.2; VII.68.3; VIII.29.8.

There are many references in the *Rigveda* where the Aśvins are connected with marriage, productivity and fertility. They place the productive germ in all creatures and generate fire, water and trees.[808] They are specifically prayed so that the procreative power may not fail.[809]

They are connected with marriage, production and love.[810] They are besought along with several other deities to bestow fertility on the bride.[811] They give the wife of an eunuch a child and make the barren cow yield milk.[812] They give a husband to the old maid[813] and bestowed a wife on one of their favourites.[814] They are responsible for the rain so essential for the fertility of the vegetative world.[815] They gave Manu rain for cultivation.[816] They are prayed for the childbirth in connection with the legend of Saptavadhri.[817]

Further, the Aśvins' connection with the honey and lotuses is significant. From this the inference can not be drawn as Hillebrandt has done that they were at first excluded from the circle of the Soma-worshipped gods. They are fond of Soma also—a fact which occurs in the *Rigveda* continually and in the family *maṇḍalas* too.[818] They have a skin filled with honey and the birds which draw them abound in it.[819] They poured out 100 jars of honey. Only the car of the Aśvins is described as honey-hued or honey-bearing.[820] They have been given a honyed goad.[821] As in the case of Viṣṇu,[822] the honey is symbolic of the fertility, of the procreating aspect of nature. That is why spring time is a time for the renewal of life. The lotus is a representative of the force and energy inherent in the water and humidity of soil or may be regarded as the generative organ of those very waters.[823] Thus the fertility aspect of the Aśvins is indicated by their connections with the honey and lotuses.

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[808] *R.V.*, I.157.5—*Yuvaṁ ha garbhaṁ jagatīṣu dhattho...'*

[809] Ibid., VII.67.6.

[810] Ibid., X.184.2; X.85.26; VI.102.1; cf. *A.V.*, II.31.2.

[811] Ibid., X.184.2.

[812] Ibid., I.112.3; X.106.13; I.180.3—*Yuvaṁ paya Usriyā yāmdhattaṁ pakvamāmāyāmava purvyaṁ goḥ.*

[813] Ibid., X.39.3.

[814] Ibid., I.116.1; I.112.19.

[815] Ibid., VI.62.2; VIII.5.21; VIII.22.6,8,9; I.112.11,12; I.180.8; VIII,26.2.

[816] Ibid., II.39.7.

[817] Ibid., V.78.59; cf. *Y.V.*, VIII.28.

[818] *R.V.*, I.46.5; I.46.12,13; I.47.1.3,5,10; I.180.2; I.180.4; I.18.3, 4; III.58.4; III.58.6,9; VIII.33.1—10; IV.44.4,5; VI.74.2; VIII.5.14; VIII.8.3,4,5.

Legends and Their Implications:

If the various legends illustrating the succouring power of the Aśvins are analysed minutely it may be seen that they are of two types—illustrating either their role as physicians for diseases such as blindness in the main or secondly, their role as physicians restoring youthful vigour, helping the young maids in production and works connected with procreative potency. The story of Cyavāna is illustrative of the second aspect. They restored him to youth, rendered him desirable to his wife[824] and made him husband of the maidens. They renewed the youth of aged Kali.[825] They brought the youthful Vimada wives[826] or a wife[827] named Kamadyū.[828] The other aspect is illustrated by such instances as that of Viṣṇāpū whom they restored to the sight of their worshipper—Viśvaka.[829] The rescue of Bhujyu who was tossed about in darkness and who invoked the aid of youthful heroes is also connected with the first aspect. The sage-Rebha overwhelmed in the waters for ten nights and ten days was revived by the Aśvins. They delivered Vandana from calamity and restored him to the light of the sun.[830] They succoured the aged Atri Saptavadhri[831] and finally released him in youthful strength, and delivered him from darkness.[832] They befriended Ghoṣā when she was growing old in her father's house by giving her a husband.[833] They restored the eye-sight of many persons such as Rijrāśva,[834] Parāvrij,[835] and Kaṇva.[836] Many other similar legends are found in the *Rigveda.* With a few exceptions the legends are connected with the restoration of the eyesight; and the renewal of youth and arrangement of marriage. These two types of works are quite natural for a solar deity. Sūrya is famous in the *Rigveda* for restoring eye-sight and curing diseases of eyes and his fertility and procreative potency is well known.[837] Therefore, it is suggested[838] that the various miracles attributed to the Aśvins are anthropomorphised form of the Sun's activity in its dual aspects of light-producing and fertility-giving.

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[819] *R.V.*, IV.45.3,4.

[820] Ibid., I.122.3; 157.4; I.34.10,11; I.112.21; *Madhupā, mādhvī, Madhūyu* are several times applied to the Aśvins; *R.V.*, I.22.3. The Asvins are asked to stir up the sacrifice with their whip which is wet with the honey. Here the words are *Kaśā madhumatyāśvinā.*

[821] Ibid., I.122.3; 157.4.

[822] Gonda, J., op. cit., p. 16.

[823] Ibid.

[824] *R.V.*, I.116.10; V.74.5.

[825] Ibid., X.39.8.

[826] Ibid., I.112.19.

[827] Ibid., I.116.1.

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[828] *R.V.,* X.65.12.

[829] Ibid., I.116.23; 117.8; X.65.12.

[830] Ibid., I.112.5, 116.11, 117.5, 118.6.

[831] Macdonell, *V.M.,* p. 53 rightly thinks that the legend of Atri may be a reminescence of a myth explaining the restoration of the vanished sun.

[832] *R.V.,* I.112.7; V.73.6.

[833] Ibid., I.117.7; X.39.3,6, 40.5.

[834] Ibid., I.116.16; 117.17,18.

[835] Ibid., I.112.8.

[836] Ibid., I.112.5.

[837] Coomarswamy, A.K., op. cit., *J.A.O.S.,* vol. 60, pp. 46-47; Titier, M., The Sun Kiss among the Hopi Indians, *J.A.O.S.,* vol. 60, p. 270.

[838] Muir, *O.S.T.,* V, 248.

Evidence of Later Vedic Literature:

The later Vedic literature corroborates the thesis that the Aśvins are representatives of the light-producing and the fertility-giving aspects of the Sun. In the *Atharvaveda*[839] they are given those very traits which are assigned to them in the *Rigveda*. For example they are lords of brightness,[840] they are invoked in the morning,[841] they are the sons of Vivasvat and Saraṇyū,[842] they are the physicians restoring the eyesight and other deseases.[843] They have been given a garland of lotuses and are intimately associated with the honey.[844] However, greater emphasis has been put upon their fertility aspect. In the *Atharvaveda* they are asked to unite loving couples,[845] and to protect crops[846] and specific charms are mentioned in this connection.[847]

In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* and the Brāhmaṇas there is hardly any new trait in the personalities of the Aśvins. As before, they are the physicians[848] curing the eyesight and other deseases.[849] They are described as the redish-white. They are invoked at morning.[850] They are honey-loving[851] and wreathed in lotuses.[852] The arms of the Aśvins referring to the rays of the sun are characteristically mentioned in the later Vedic literature.[853] In the Upaniṣads the Aśvins are mentioned sparingly but wherever they are referred to that is in connection with the procreation.[854] The character of charioteers assigned to them in the *Rigveda* is continued in the later Vedic literature. In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* it is mentioned that the oblations for the Aśvins should be offered in the house of the charioteer and the sacrifical fee is two born of one mother.[855] This brings out two features of their personality—their twin nature and their character as charrioteers. They are invoked when the horses run away from the chariot or there is any apprehension of breaking away of the chariot.[856]

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[839] Shende, N.J., op. cit., p. 257 and Karamvelkar, op. cit., p. 118 do not include them in the list of the Sun-gods.

[840] *A.V.*, IX.1.19; VI.69.2. Here the term *'Śubhaspatī'* is used which is specifically given to them in the *Rigveda*.

[841] Ibid., III.16.1.

[842] Ibid., XIII.2.33.

[843] Ibid., VII.53.1; II.29.6.

[844] Ibid., IX.1.10.24; VI.69.2. The term *madhukaśā* used for the Aśvins is differently interpreted as rain by Henry, *Les Hymn Rohitas,* the honey that flashes by Bergaigne, *La Religion Vedique,* II.443 or the morning dew by Oldenberg, op. cit., p. 209, but all these show the fertility aspect of the sun.

[845] Ibid., II.30.2.

[846] Ibid., VI.50.1; VI.103.1; VI.141.2.

[847] Ibid., X.6.12; VI.102.1.

[848] *T.S.*, V.3.1; *S.B.*, V.15.4.15, 24,26; XII.7.2.39; *A.B.*, I.18.16.

[849] *S.B.*, XII.8.2.16; 3.14; *P.B.*, 1.7.7.

[850] *S.B.*, VII.5; *A.B.*, II.15.

[851] *S.B.*, IV.1.3.13.

In the later Vedic literature references are found showing that the position of the Aśvins came to be degraded and the orthodox circles looked down upon them. In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*[857] it is mentioned that the Aśvins did not drink Soma in the beginning and later on they acquired the drinking of Soma. They are to be invoked by a bad Brāhmaṇa desirous of drinking Soma. With a similar view it is said in the Brāhmaṇas that the gods did not invite them at their sacrifice because of their too much mixing with the human-beings. It has already been shown earlier that the Aśvins are Soma-drinkers from the beginning because such references are found in the earliest strata of the *Rigveda*. Their downfall in the post-Rigvedic era appears to us as a result of the fertility aspect of them which came to be emphasised more and more in the later Vedic period. Among the orthodox circles this field was a private and closed book and therefore they did not like this aspect of them which became more prominent than the other one in the later Vedic period.

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[852] *A.G.S.*, I.15.2; *P.G.S.*. II.4.8.

[853] *A.B.*, IV.1; *P.B.*, I.8.1; *S.B.*, I.2.2.1; I.2.4.4; I.7.4.13; III.5.4.4, 6.1.4; III.7.1.1; *T.S.*, I.1.4; I.4.6.

[854] *B.A.U.*, VI.4.21,22.

[855] *T.S.*, I.8.9.

[856] *P.G.S.*, III.14.12, 13ff.

[857] *T.S.*, II.1.10.

Thus it appears that the physical basis of the Aśvins was simply solar in its dual aspect of fertility and light and since both aspects were quite important they were treated as two different deities. Two things—light and productivity—were very much needed by the Āryans and hence the important place to the Aśvins. The post-Vedic traditions[858] as well as the later iconography[859] confirm the view. It is just possible that the idea of these gods goes back as far as the Indo-European[860] and the Indo-Irānian periods but as the name shows it was of purely Indian formation.[861]

I. VENA

Vena is another god of the Vedic tradition who is taken by many scholars as the Sun-god.[862] He is invoked in the tenth *maṇḍala* of the *Rigveda*[863] and also in the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*[864] and the *Atharvaveda*.[865] In view of the above facts it may be said that he is a creation of the later stage of the Vedic literature. In the *Rigveda* he is a more concrete deity than what he is in the *Atharvaveda* and the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*. It is not difficult to trace his original solar basis in all these texts. Weber[866] translates the word[867] as the seer connecting it with the Zend root √Vaen=to see. This derivation favours his solar origin. It appears that it was a qualifying epithet of the Sun-god in the beginning, but later on as the tendency towards abstraction increased this came to signify the creator-aspect of the Sun-god. He symbolises the spiritual light that reveals the world. He became the symbol of the highest causal principle of the universe.[868] This development may be traced in the Vedic literature. In an older[869] reference[870] in the *Rigveda* the word is simply a qualifying epithet of the Sun.[871] In a later reference in the *Rigveda*[872] he becomes a full-fledged Sun-god. He lives in the highest heaven.[873] He shines on the summit of the water in heavens.[874] He is a strongwinged bird in the sky.[875] He has been identified with the Sun.[876] He, like other Sun-gods, is responsible for the rain.[877] These descriptions show that by the end of the *Rigveda* Vena became the Sun-god particularly as the rain-giver. In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* and the *Atharvaveda* he becomes the highest principle in the universe;[878] though his solar basis is continued.[879] He is said to have revealed the womb of being and not being,[880] but in the same references he is said to have disclosed bright flashes from the summit when the prayer was born first in the east. In the *Atharvaveda*[881] he is the first cause of the things, the father of the universe, the friend of the cosmic order.[882] It is significant to point out that the Sun was regarded as the primal cause of the universe in the Vedic cosmology[883] and this tendency increases in the later Vedic literature.[884] Vena is one of the examples of such belief because originally he is the representative of the rising sun which was later on identified with the 'prayer' and ultimately with the creator and the first principle in the universe.

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[858] *M.B.H.*, I.1.114; I.2.171; I.3.56.

[859] Agarwala, R.C., Aśvins in Sculpture from Rajasthan, *J.I.H.*, April, 1963.

[860] Harris, J.R., *The Cult of the Heavenly Twins*, p. 152 has shown the intimate connection of the heavenly twins in the Indo-European mythology with the fertility.

[861] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 49; Przyluski, J., Les Aśvins et la Grande Decse, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, I, pp. 129—35 shows the connection between the Aśvins and the mother goddess of Indus Valley Civilization. It is difficult to agree with the latter as there is no reliable evidence in favour of this theory.

[862] See, Apte, *V.M.*, An Investigation into the Nature of Vena—the deity of the Rigvedic Hymn, X.123. *B.D.C.R.I.*, VI.12, 1944; Griffith, op. cit., vol. I, p. 41; Karambelkar, op. cit., p. 117.

[863] *R.V.*, X.123.

[864] *T.S.*, IV.2.8.

[865] *A.V.*, II.1.

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[866] *I.S.*, XIII.129.216.

[867] *R.V.*, X.123.

[868] Hillebrandt, *Soma*, p. 322 regards him as the moon but we have failed to find any evidence in favour of his view.

[869] According to Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 2, this reference will fall in the second stage of the composition of the *Rigveda* and it is older than the tenth *maṇḍala* where this divinity is celebrated independently.

[870] *R.V.*, I.83.5—*Tataḥ Sūryo Vratapā Vena ājani.*

[871] Bloomfield, *The Atharvaveda*, Grundriss, II, p. 89.

[872] *R.V.*, X.123.

[873] Ibid., X.123.5.

[874] Ibid., X.123.2.

[875] Ibid., X.123.6.

[876] Ibid.

[877] Ibid., X.123,2,7.

[878] Whitney, W.D., (tr.) *The Atharvaveda Saṁhitā, H.O.S.*, vol. 7, p. 37; Shende, op. cit., p. 310.

J. ROHITA

Similar is the case of Rohita[885] who is a significant creation of the Atharvavedic seers. In his praise the whole thirteenth book of the *Atharvaveda* (Śaunaka recension) is devoted. The Paippalāda version of the *Atharvaveda* has only two Rohita-hymns in the XVIIIth book whereas the Śaunaka recension has four hymns in the XIIIth book. In the former four verses (56, 57, 58 and 60) from the first hymn of the XIIIth book of the latter are wanting. The word *Rohita* occurs 17 times in the *Rigveda* but not as a god while it occurs about 75 times in the *Atharvaveda* as a deity. Therefore, it may be suggested that Rohita as a god is an independent and original contribution of the Atharvavedic seer—most probably Brahmā.[886] It is not definitely known whether the conception of Rohita as a god in the *Atharvaveda* is originally based upon some concrete natural phenomenon or upon some abstract notion or is derived from some epithet or attribute of a thing. Macdonell[887] considers that Rohita, 'the Red-one' was originally an epithet of the Sun and figures in the *Atharvaveda* as a separate deity in the capacity of a creator. While examining the validity of Macdonell's thesis it has been rightly observed[888] that Rohita does not figure as an epithet of the Sun in the *Rigveda* and in most of the cases it is an attribute qualifying the horses of Agni, Vāyu or Maruts or some king. *Rohita* denotes a red horse in the *Rigveda*[889] and later,[890] while *Rohita* in some passages of the *Rigveda* denotes, according to *St. Petersberg Dictionary,* a red mare while later it means a 'red doe'.[891]

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[879] Griffith, op. cit., p. 41, f.n. 1 Sāyaṇa takes Vena as Āditya—A.V., II.1 *Venate kānte karmasu pithād dīpyamāna Ādityo Vena iti Ucyate* but after a complete exposition on this basis he suggests alternative interpretations—as the deity of the middle region or Prişni, the common name of the sky and the Sun. Pandit, S.P. (Ed.), op. cit., vol. I, p. 189.

[880] *T.S.*, IV.2.8; *A.V.*, IV.1.1.

[881] *A.V.*, II.1.1–5.

[882] Ibid., II.1.3—*sa naḥ pitā janitā sa uta bandhurdhāmani Veda bhuvanāni viśvā.* This is taken from *R.V.*, X.82.3 with slight variations. This was used in connection with Viśvakarman in the *Rigveda*.

[883] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 13; see Hasting's *E.R.E.*, vol. IV, Vedic Cosmology.

[884] See, Barua, B.M., *Pre-Buddhistic Indian Philosophy*.

[885] Srivastava, V.C., Rohita in the Atharvaveda, *Q.J.M.S.*, vol. LVIII, Jan., 1968, No. 4.

J. Muir[892] thinks that Rohita represents a form of the fire and of the sun. Griffith[893] follows Muir in this respect. But a study of the Rohita-hymns in the *Atharvaveda* reveals that generally he is a deity of the heaven—a fact which goes against the theory that regards him as a form of the fire. Moreover, the fire itself may be regarded as the earthly form of the Sun. Hopkins[894] suggests that the Atharvans glorified the Sun under the name of Rohita as the creator. Whitney[895] describes the word simply as a name or form of the Sun. Bloomfield while accepting Rohita as a form of the Sun-god,[896] thinks that the sole purpose of these hymns is to glorify a king and a queen under the names of Rohita and Rohiṇī. Thus Rohita and Rohiṇī represent the allegorical exaltation of a king and his queen.[897] He has advanced many arguments in support of his theory. Firstly, the root '*ruh*' in the word '*Rohita*' is a suitable ground for such comparison because the king ascends throne, skin or horse.[898] Secondly, many stanzas in the Rohita-hymns are common with those utilised for the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. In the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*[899] there occur a number of verses of these hymns. The commentator explains the word '*Rohita*' as a horse employed in the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice. It is probable, according to Bloomfield,[900] that some stanzas of these hymns were originally composed for that purpose. There are in this book of Rohita, according to N. J. Shende,[901] a number of references[902] which point out that Rohita is a king and the world he created is his kingdom. V. W. Karambelkar[903] follows him when he says that the first 35 stanzas—the main stock, correlate him with the earthly king. Sāyaṇa also sees this purpose in the hymn.[904] In spite of the fact that the theory has been so ably propounded and widely accepted, it is difficult to agree with it. It is no surprise if a solar god is employed in kingly rites since the Sun has been described as the heavenly king in the Vedic literature. Rohita is described as a creator, therefore his comparison with a king who creates his kingdom and things therein is quite understandable even on solar basis.

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[886] *Brihatsarvānukramaṇikā* (Ed) Vishva Bandhu, Hosiarpur, 1966, p. 97.

[887] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 115.

[888] Shende, N.J., op. cit., p. 223.

[889] *R.V.,* I.94.10, 134.3; II.10.2; III.6.6.

[890] *T.S.,* I.6.4.3; *P.B.,* XIV.3.12.

[891] Macdonell & Keith (Ed), *Vedic Index,* vol. II, p. 228.

[892] Muir, J., *O.S.T.,* vol. V., p. 395.

[893] Griffith, op. cit., vol. II, p. 133 f.n.

[894] Hopkins, op. cit., p. 209, f.n.i.

[895] Whitney, W.D., op. cit.. *H.O.S.,* vol. VIII, p. 709.

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[896] *The Atharvaveda and the Gopatha Brāhmaṇa, Grundriss*, II, p. 93.

[897] Bloomfield (Tr) *Atharvaveda, S.B.E.*, vol. XLII, pp. 661-62.

[898] *Vaitāna Sūtra*, 36.7; *Kauśika Sūtra*, 17.3.9, 13–22; *A.B.*, VIII.6–12.

[899] *T.B.*, II.5.2, 1–3.

[900] *American Journal of Philology*, XII,- p. 429.

[901] Shende, N.J., op. cit., p. 227.

[902] *A.V.*, XIII.1.1.1.4; 1.9,1.10.

[903] *Atharvavedic Civilization*, p. 23.

[904] *Rohitasya tathā tatsambandhi devānāmatra varaṇane prayojnaṁ rāgñyo rāṣṭrasya bharaṇaṁ iti sūkta itastato draṣṭabyaṁ.* Pandit, op. cit., ch. XIII, Intr.

Renou[905] includes Rohita in the category of gods of light and regards him further as a cosmic symbol of the Sun. Sāyaṇa[906] describes him as the rising sun. Shamasastri[907] considers that Rohita is the name of a cyclic solar eclipse-dark red in colour. He treats Rohita from the astronomical point of view.[908]

It appears to us that Rohita was originally the deified red orb of the rising sun which came to be regarded metaphysically as the primal source and principle of life and existence. He was something like the *Hiraṇyagarbha* of the *Rigveda*. Let us substantiate our thesis by referring to the different traits of Rohita's personality in the *Atharvaveda*.

Rohita as the Designation of Red Orb of The Rising Sun:

That Rohita was a designation of the red orb of the rising sun is indicated by the following descriptions of him in the *Atharvaveda*. The very name 'Rohita' meaning 'the ruddy one'[909] is a pointer in this direction. Further, Rohita has been identified and sometimes associated with Sūrya, the concrete Sun-god of the Vedic times whose conception was primarily based upon the solar orb.[910] About 30 times Sūrya has been mentioned in the Rohita-hymns.[911] Rohita as Sūrya has been invested with all those very qualities which are generally associated with the orb of the Sun in the *Rigveda*. He has been given a chariot drawn by yellow white horses.[912] It is comparable with the Rigvedic description of Sūrya as drawn by horses.[913] Rohita as Sūrya looks upon the sky, the earth and the waters and is the one eye of the existence.[914]

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[905] *Vedic India*, p. 67.

[906] Pandit, op. cit., vol. III, p. 257—*Rohitaḥ Kaściddevaḥ/ udyan yah sūryastadātmaka iti gñeyam.*

[907] *Poona Orientalist*, 1942, p. 162.

[908] Henry, V., *Les Hymnes Rohitas,* Paris, 1891 points out that only three stanzas (56—58) refers to the solar eclipse.

[909] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 11; Bloomfield, op. cit., p. 93. In *H.G.S.*, II.16.4 the Sun has been specifically called Rohita—*Namaḥ Sūryāya Rohitāya divyānāmadhipataye namaḥ.*

[910] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 30.

[911] *A.V.*, XIII.I.24,25,32,35,39,45 (four times); II.23,24,29,32, 34,35,37,43; III.10; IV.5.

In the *Rigveda* too Sūrya's connection with eye is prominent[915] and he is described as all-seeing.[916] Rohita is the maker of the day.[917] It is a direct and clear description of the rising sun overpowering darkness and illumining the directions. Rohita as the rising sun is praised to kill all rivals of the singer who would then conceal themselves into deep darkness.[918] Rohita is the wise Sūrya in the sky.[919] He like Sūrya is the heavenly herdsman who illumines the regions with light and flies like swift, mighty bird in the sky.[920]

He, like Sūrya is the measurer of day and night.[921] He, as Sūrya has mounted the celestial regions and is the day-maker and has shone away the darkness.[922] There was a belief[923] in the Vedic times that the sun never sets nor rises and when people think that the sun is setting it is not so because after having arrived at the end of the day it makes itself to produce two opposite effects—making the night to what is below and the day to what is on the other side. This belief is expressed in the *Atharvaveda* in connection with Rohita[924] which shows that he was the Sun-god.

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[912] *A.V.*, XIII.1.24–*Sūryasyāśvā harayaḥ ketumantaḥ sadā vahantyamritāḥ sukhaṁ ratham*. Similar descriptions are again found in XIII.2.6,7; XIII.2.24.

[913] *R.V.*, I.50.8,9, VII.60.3.

[914] *A.V.*, XIII.1.45–*Sūryo dyāṁ sūryaḥ prithvīṁ sūrya āpoti paśyati / Sūryo bhutasyaaikaṁ cakṣurāruroḥ divaṁ mahim.* cf., XIII.2.17.

[915] *R.V.*, V.40.8.; I.115.1; VII.71.3.

[916] Ibid., VII.35.8; X.37.1; I.50.2,7; VI.51.2; VII.60.2, 61.1, 63.1.4.

[917] *A.V.*, XIII.2.34–*Citraṁ devānāṁ keturnīkaṁ jyotiṣmān pradiśaḥ sūryaḥ udayan divakaroti dhumnaistamānsi viśvātārīd duritāni śukraḥ.*

[918] Ibid., XIII.2.32–*Citraścikitvān mahiṣaḥ suparṇa ārocayan radasi antarikṣam / ahorātre parisūryaṁ vasāne prāsyaviśvā tiratovīryāṇi;* cf. *A.V.*, XIII.2.4.

[919] Ibid., XII.1.39–*Itaḥ paśyanti rocanaṁ divi Sūryaṁ Vipaścitam.*

[920] Ibid., XIII.2.2–*diśāṁ prajñānāṁ svaryantamarciṣā supakṣāmaśuṁ patyantamarnave / stavāṁ sūryaṁ bhuvanasya gopāṁ yo raśmibhirdiśaṁ ābhati sarvāḥ.*

[921] Ibid., XIII.2.5.

Identification of Rohita with Sūrya:

Thus Rohita has been identified directly with Sūrya in many verses and given all those qualities and characteristics which are assigned to Sūrya in the *Rigveda* thereby showing that Rohita's conception was primarily derived from the solar orb which is termed as Sūrya in the *Rigveda*. Further, the notion of the rising sun is always present before the singer of the Rohita-hymns as the rising sun is the single phenomenon which has been referred to so many times in the *Atharvaveda* in the Rohita-book. He has been identified with other solar deities also such as Savitri[925] and Viṣṇu.[926] He is Āditya watching men.[927] Āditya when used in singular in the *Atharvaveda* is a term for the Sun.[928] He is the white son of the black mother.[929] Here the white son of morning after dark night is referred to which refers to the day. He is born again and again[930] and his births are one thousand and seven.[931] Obviously it is a solar description since the sun is born daily. He is within the waters, is the power of the water and mounts from the great ocean.[932] Here the heavenly ocean is meant from which the sun is supposed to come out.[933] Rohita hastily moves from the east to the west making day and night[934] by magic. It is a clear reference to the sun. His road is very vast,[935] still he goes to the two borders like a calf to two mothers.[936] He clothes himself in the womb of the earth, the heaven and the atmosphere[937]—a reference to his triple birth and existence on earth in the form of Agni, in atmosphere in the form of lightning and in heaven in the form of the sun. Aja-Ekapāda—a solar deity,[938] is associated with Rohita.[939] Like Sūrya he is called a divine and red eagle flying in the sky.[940] He is also called as a child of Virāj, probably Uṣā,[941] a natural description in case of a solar deity. Like Sūrya in the *Rigveda*[942] he is called simply a bull[943] or the bull of prayers[944] in the *Atharvaveda* which actually refers to the sun. Thus the solar nature of Rohita is deducible from many descriptions of him in the *Atharvaveda*. It is also relevant to point out that many verses ascribed to Sūrya in the *Rigveda* have been taken and utilized for Rohita in the *Atharvaveda*.[945]

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[922] *A.V.*, XIII.2.34.

[923] Haug, M. (Ed), *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, III.44.

[924] *A.V.*, XIII.2.43—*abhyanyadeti paryanyadasyate ahorātrābhyāṁ mahiṣaḥ kalpamānaḥ / Sūryaṁ Vayaṁ rajasi ksiyantaṁ gātuvidaṁ havāmahe nādhamānāḥ.*

[925] *A.V.*, XIII.2.36; XIII.4.1.

[926] Ibid., XIII.2.31.

[927] Ibid., XIII,2.3.

[928] Shende, op. cit., p. 311.

[929] *A.V.*, XIII.3.26—*Kriṣṇāyāḥ putro arjuno rātryāvatsoajāyata.*

[930] Ibid., XIII.2.25.

[931] Ibid., XIII.1.37.

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[932] Ibid., XIII.1,1,2,26.

[933] *R.V.*, X.72.7.

[934] *A.V.*, XIII.2.13.

[935] Ibid., XIII.2.4.

[936] Ibid., XIII.2.13.

[937] *A.V.*, XIII.2.11.

[938] Dumont, P.E., The Indic god, Aja Ekapāda, *J.A.O.S.*, vol. 53, pp. 326—34.

[939] *A.V.*, XIII.1.6.

[940] Ibid., XIII.2.9,36; cf. *R.V.*, VII.63.5; V.45.9.

[941] Bloomfield, M., op. cit., *S.B.E.*, XLII, p. 667; Griffith, op. cit., vol. II, p. 139.

[942] *R.V.*, X.189.1.

[943] *A.V.*, XIII.2.42.

[944] Ibid., XIII.1.33.

[945] *A.V.*, XIII.1.41; cf. *R.V.*, I.164.7,17; *A.V.*, XIII.1.42; cf. *R.V.*, I.164.41; *A.V.*, XIII.1.59; cf. *R.V.*, X.57.1; *A.V.*, XIII.1.60; cf. *R.V.*, X.57.2; *A.V.*, XIII.2.11; cf. *R.V.*, X.85.18; *A.V.*, XIII.2.16-24; cf. *R.V.*, I.50.1—9; *A.V.*, XIII.2.35; cf. *R.V.*, I.115; *A.V.*, XIII.3.9; cf. *R.V.*, I.164.47, etc.

Rohita as The Ultimate Reality:

In addition to this primitive, primary and naturalistic side, there is an advanced, secondary and metaphysical side of Rohita's personality in the *Atharvaveda*. Here the sun-principle has been exalted to the status of the highest god, the primary source of the existence and the creation.[946] It appears that the elevation of Rohita to the status of supreme godhood could be made possible by syncretic associations of Rohita with three movements originating in the *Rigveda* and culminating in the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads. These are ritualistic, pantheistic and idealistic tendencies of the Vedas. The ritualistic tendency which regarded sacrifice and (whose visible deity) Agni as most important source of life identified Rohita with sacrifice and Agni.[947] He is the sacrifice himself and the head of the sacrifice.[948] He shines in the sky on account of sacrifice. The sacrifices, purified by Brahman, carry him up and he shines beyond the ocean.[949] Rohita, though sacrifices himself, offers too a primaeval sacrifice. All was born from this sacrifice.[950] Rohita is thus the performer of a sacrifice from which all life and universe were produced. The *Puruṣasūkta* of the *Rigveda*[951] also envisages such an ideal sacrifice. Thus the ritualistic tendency was responsible for making him as the source of the life and the existence. Further, the pantheistic and idealistic tendencies led the seers to make him identical with the universe and the nature and finally with the supreme spirit and ultimate reality under the names of Brahman and Prajāpati and therefore with all gods. Rohita in this capacity is said to create all forms[952] and is described as the lord of the existence that is and that shall be.[953] He puts all the gods in his chest and goes on viewing the whole existence.[954] Day and night, atmosphere, wind, sky, quarters, earth, fire and water and sacrifice gave birth to him and also are born of him.[955] He thought of the universal form[956] and he is Brahman.[957] Rohita created Soma, water plants, herbs, bipeds and quadrupeds.[958] In him abide the six directions.[959] From him winds blow and the oceans flow.[960] All the world breaths on account of him.[961] In him are set six spaces.[962] It may be suggested here that since Rohita was regarded as the highest and supreme lord of the universe, hence he was also praised as a king.[963] There is no glorification of some earthly king as Bloomfield, N. J. Shende and Karambelkar believed but the fact appears to be that kingly qualities stealed into his personality because of his undisputed mastery of the universe. Rohiṇī is formed just as Indrāṇi to satisfy the need of a female consort to them. Because of ritualistic activities he is asked to harm those who harm a Brāhmaṇa.[964]

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[946] Bloomfield, M., op. cit., p. 89; Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, Barua, B.M., *Pre-Buddhistic Indian Philosophy*, p. 90.

[947] *A.V.*, XIII.1.11,12,13.

[948] Ibid., XIII.4.40.

[949] Ibid., XIII.1.16.

[950] Ibid., XIII.1.46–55.

[951] *R.V.*, X.90.

[952] *A.V.*, XIII.1.11.

[953] Ibid., XIII.3.7.

Thus these three tendencies—ritualistic, pantheistic and idealistic, went to raise Rohita to the supreme godhood and from the solar principle the highest principle of the life and the existence was evolved. In a very veiled form there may be seen the mingling of these three trends into the *Gāyatrī* stanza in praise of Savitri[965]—another solar god of the *Rigveda*.[966] Thus Savitri is a forerunner of Rohita in this respect. A full blossom of that embroynic synthesis is found in the personality of Rohita of the *Atharvaveda.* To recapitulate, Rohita represented primarily the red orb of the rising sun. His identification with the sacrifice, the universe, Brahman and Prajāpati led to his evolution as the highest principle of the existence, the very source of life, the creator per-excellence.

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[954] *A.V.*, XIII.2.38.
[955] Ibid., XIII.4.20—39.
[956] Ibid., XIII.1.8.
[957] Ibid., XIII.2.13.
[958] Ibid., XIII.1.2.
[959] Ibid.
[960] Ibid., XIII.3.2.
[961] Ibid., XIII.3.3.
[962] Ibid., XIII.3.6.
[963] Ibid., XIII.1.1,4,9,10.
[964] Ibid., XIII.3.
[965] *R.V.*, III.62.10.
[966] Bloomfield, M., op. cit., p. 89; Hopkins, E.W., op. cit., p. 257

Theriomorphic, Fetishistic and Symbolic Forms of The Sun-Gods:

Besides the anthropomorphic form the Sun was worshipped in theriomorphic, fetishistic and symbolic forms as well in the Vedic age. No doubt these aspects played minor role as compared to the anthropomorphic forms.[967]

Theriomorphism:

There is no evidence of any direct theriomorphism in the case of the Sun-gods but it is quite probable that there may have been some animals behind the anthropomorphic forms of a few Sun-gods. The Aśvins appear to have the horses in the background of their personalities. Pūṣan and Aja-Ekapāda seem to have the goats behind their character.[968] Viṣṇu may be a remnant of the bird-form. Sūrya has been several times described as the horse, the eagle or swan or a particular bird *'Suparṇa Garutmat'* and the bull also[969] in the *Rigveda* as well as in the later Vedic literature Besides these identifications of the Sun-gods with the animals there are various animal–fetishes of the Sun-gods in the Vedic worship. These animal fetishes do not play very important role but they do find place in the mythological conceptions of the Vedic gods.

Animal-Fetishes of The Sun-God:

Horse:—The horse in general is symbolic of the Sun. This is clear from many descriptions of him in the *Rigveda* as well as in the later Vedic literature. It is said that the sacrificial steed is fashioned out of the Sun.[970] It is believed that the dawn leads a white steed.[971] Sūrya has been intimately associated with the horse when it is said that his seven horses draw him to us.[972] Here the horses of the Sun-god have been directly worshipped.[973] In the Brāhmaṇas he has been directly identified with the horse.[974] In many Vedic rituals the horse was employed as symbol of the Sun and the fire. For example, in the establishment and re-establishment of the fires a horse is employed as a Sun-symbol.[975] In the *Āgrāyaṇa Iṣṭi* the black-horse employed for the rain-spell may be regarded as the symbol of the Sun in his capacity as the rain-giver.[976] In the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice the horse was employed as the symbol of the Sun as the lord of the heaven.[977] Since it was a rite for universal overlordship it is natural to employ such a symbol. It is significant to point out that the horse has been directly identified with the Sun-god and it is equally significant to point out that before the horse is set free to wander offerings are made of cakes to Savitri in various form for three days.[978] Therefore it is quite probable that the horse in the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice was the sun-steed.[979] At the *Ṣoḍaśin* form of the Soma sacrifice when the chant at sunset is being performed a horse, either white or black is to be present. He symbolises the Sun-god.[980] Thus it is indicated that the horse served as the animal-fetish of the Sun-god in the Vedic theology.

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[967] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, pp. 61–74; Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 148; cf. Marx, K. & Engels, F., *On Religion*, p. 22.

[968] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 62.

[969] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 31.

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[970] *R.V.*, I.163.2—*Sūrādaśvaṁ Vasavo nirtaṣṭa.*

[971] Ibid., VII.77.3—*Śvetaṁ nayantī Sudriśīkamaśvaṁ.*

[972] Ibid., I.50.1,8,9; I.115.3.

[973] Ibid., V.45.9; VII.60.3; *A.V.*, XIII.3.18; *T.S.*, V.6.4.

[974] *S.B.*, VI.3.1.29; VI.3.3.10; VII.3.2.10; II.6.3.12; *A.B.*, VI.35.

[975] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, vol. II, p. 316.

[976] Ibid., p. 324.

[977] *A.B.*, VIII.20.

[978] *S.S.S.*, XVI.1.21.

[979] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, pp. 345—47; Von Negelein, *Des Pferd vin arischen Altertum*, p. 97 also believes in this interpretation. See, Eggeling, J., *S.B.E.*, XVIII-XXIV, Cook, *Zeus*, I.180,81; Keith, *J.R.A.S.*, 1916, p. 548; Keith, *T.S.*, I. pp. CXXXIV ff.

[980] *T.S.*, VI.6.11.6.

The deification of the horse as a symbol of the Sun-god occupies a prominent position in the *Rigveda* where four concrete examples of such deifications are given. These are Dadhikrā, Tārkṣya, Paidva and Etaśa.

Dadhikrā:—Dadhikrā has been variously interpreted as a real horse of a horse-race,[981] the lightning,[982] a theriomorphic form of the Sun,[983] the circling ball of the Sun.[984] The view that Dadhikrā represents the theriomorphic form of the swift-moving luminary, Sūrya, in his warlike aspect is supported by such features as his swiftness,[985] his being the first steed at the head of the chariot,[986] his identification with an eagle, a swan dwelling[987] in the light and belonging to all the tribes[988] and his association with morning hours and such solar deities as Sūrya, Uṣas and the Aśvins.[989] Dadhyanc is allied to Dadhikrā in name and nature both.[990]

Tārkṣya:—Tārkṣya has been given similar features as Dadhikrā and may have been the theriomorphic form of the Sun and not a real horse deified.[991]

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981. *O.R.V.*, pp. 69—71; Pischel, op. cit., I, p. 124; Ludwig, A (Tr) *Rigveda*, IV, p. 71; Bradke, V., *Z.D.M.G.*, 42, pp. 447—49.
982. Bergaigne, A., op. cit., II, pp. 456-57.
983. Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 190.
984. Roth, R., P.W., Grassmann, op. cit., cf. Hopkins, *E.W.*, op. cit., p. 55 n. 5; Renou, L., op. cit., p. 74.
985. *R.V.*, IV.38.2,9; 39.1.
986. Ibid., VII.44.4; IV.38.3.
987. Ibid., IV.40.2,3,5; 38.5.
988. Ibid., IV.38.10.
989. Ibid., IV.39.1.3; 40.1; VII.41.6; cf. III.20.1,5; VII.44.1; X.101.1.
990. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 149; Renou, op. cit., p. 74.
991. Bergaigne, op. cit., vol. II, p. 498. For criticism, see Keith, op. cit., p. 190. For details see Macdonell, op. cit., pp. 149-50; Tārkśya as the Sun-horse is rightly described as the bearer to the world of heaven, *A.B.*, VI.20; cf. *R.V.*, X.178.

Paidva:—Paidva who has been described as given by Aśvins to Pedu and is white[992] and a dragon slayer[993] may also have been symbolic of the Sun.[994]

Etaśa:—Even more certain is the solar nature of Etaśa. It has rightly been suggested[995] that in the plural it denotes often the horses of the Sun and in the singular it denotes either the Sun-horses or the wheel which draws the Sun. It is said that this swift god Etaśa draws the bright form of the Sun or the wheel of the Sun.[996]

Bull:—The bull appears to have been another animal-fetish of the Sun-god. Sūrya has been called a bull in the *Rigveda*.[997] Rohita, the Sun-god of the *Atharvaveda* is also described as the bull.[998] In the later Vedic literature[999] the Rigvedic description of the Sun as the bull is repeated. There cannot be any doubt to the identification of the bull with the Sun as the bull is described as ruling over thirty days which is a clear description of the solar months. In the Brāhmaṇas a reddish white bullock is said to have been the fee for Savitri—the Sun-god.[1000] In many rites of the *Atharvaveda* the bull was employed as the symbol of the Sun-god.[1001] Thus the bull, though less popular than the horse and the bird, is the symbol of the Sun-god in the Vedic literature. It is a symbol of other gods also as of Indra.[1002] In ancient mythologies of the world the bull was regarded as the animal-fetish of the Sun-god. It is significant to recall that in the Harappa culture as discussed in the previous chapter the bull was an object of the worship. The bull represents the procreative potency of the Sun.[1003]

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[992] *R.V.*, I.119.10; VII.71.5; I.116.6.

[993] Ibid., I.117.9.

[994] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 191; Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 149.

[995] Ibid.

[996] *R.V.*, VII.66.14; VII.63.2; I.121.13; V.31.11.

[997] Ibid., X.189.1.

[998] *A.V.*, XIII.2.42.

[999] *T.S.*, I.5.3., *S.B.*, II.1.4.29.

[1000] *S.B.*, V.3.1.7.

[1001] *A.V.*, IV.38; IV.2; V.7; VI.31.

[1002] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 150.

Goat:—The goat also served as an animal—fetish of the Sun-god. Pūṣan, the Sun-god is specially connected with the goat.[1004] It also figures as divine in the form of Aja Ekapāda.[1005]

Bird:—The bird in general is another symbol of the Sun-god on account of its swiftness of speed. In the *Rigveda* Sūrya has been too frequently compared with the bird.[1006] Sometimes it is an eagle or a swan or a falcon. In a few references a particular bird—Suparṇa-Garutmat or simply Suparṇa is associated with him.[1007] In the later Vedic texts[1008] such descriptions continue which show that the bird in general and Suparṇa Garutmat in particular was symbolic of the Sun-god. In the post-Vedic period the latter became an integral part of Viṣṇu's personality.[1009] It is difficult to identify this bird. Probably it was a mythical bird.

Material Objects as Sun-Fetishes:

Wheel:—Many material objects were also employed in the Vedic age as symbols representing deities. The wheel was a popular symbol of the Sun-god as 'representing both its shape and its motion'.[1010] In the *Rigveda* the wheels of the Sun's chariot are too often mentioned.[1011] In the Vedic rituals the wheel was often employed to symbolise the Sun. In the *Vājapeya* sacrifice the wheel-symbolism of the Sun is employed.[1012] Similarly the wheel was employed as the symbol of the Sun in the ritual of laying the sacrifical fire and at the solstitial festival.[1013] At one occasion Viṣṇu, the Sun-god is identified with the wheel.[1014] In the post-Vedic mythology the wheel is a regular emblem of Viṣṇu. The later literature[1015] and the iconography indicate the solar nature of the wheel. The wheel was recognized[1016] among the Celts and the Germans as the symbol of the Sun[1017] and therefore it is suggested that the symbolism may be Indo-European[1018] in origin. But it should not be forgotten that there was a tradition of worship of the wheel as the Sun-symbol in pre-Vedic India also. In earliest series of the punch-marked coins such symbols[1019] are found represented profusely. Therefore the probability can not be ruled out that the wheel as a symbol of the Sun may be pre-Vedic in origin and the Indo-European tradition simply strengthened the old tradition. Both helped in the development of the *Cakra-Sudarśana* emblem of Viṣṇu in the post-Vedic mythology.

[1003] Coomarswamy, *J.A.O.S.*, vol. 60, pp. 47–67; Mackay, op. cit., p. 339.

[1004] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 35.

[1005] Ibid., p. 73.

[1006] *R.V.*, V.47.3; VII.60.5; X.177.1,2.

[1007] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 152.

[1008] *A.V.*, XII.3.38; VI.12; VII.39; X.8.17; *A.B.*, IV.7; XVIII.4; *P.B.*, XIII.10.14; *S.B.*, IX.4.4.3; IX.2.3.18; Shende, op. cit., p. 385.

[1009] Gonda, *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism*, p. 101.

[1010] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 155.

[1011] *R.V.*, I.175.4; IV.30.4; IV.28.2; V.29.10; cf. *A.V.*, XIII.3.18.

Gold-Disc:—A disc of gold as well as simply the gold served as a symbol of the Sun-god in the Vedic rituals.[1020] The origin of this practice may be traced in the *Rigveda*. Sūrya has been described as *rukma* in the sky in a significant reference in the *Rigveda*.[1021] Since the phrase has not been repeated for any other god in the *Rigveda*[1022] the description is to be taken as specific of the Sun-god. The word '*rukma*'[1023] here too is taken by Sāyaṇa to mean either the bright or the ornament and the phrase is taken to mean that this Sun which is the ornament of the sky has risen. In the Brāhmaṇas the word appears to have been conventionalized to mean a disc of gold in reference to the Sun while at other places it may mean simply the gold ornament.[1024] In the Vedic rituals a gold plate was employed to symbolise the Sun.[1025] In many rituals simply the gold served as the symbol of the Sun.[1026] A fire-brand was also employed to represent the Sun-god.[1027] The gold on account of its shining nature was a fit symbol of the god of light. A disc of gold resembles the shape of the solar orb and therefore it is befitting to employ it as the symbol of the Sun.

[1012] Keith, *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, I, p. CX; *R.P.V.U.*, I, p. 67, II. p 340.

[1013]. *O.R.V.*, 88, n. 4.

[1014]. *R.V.*, I.155.6.

[1015]. *Matsya P.*, Chs. 74—84; Hazra, R.C., *Studies in the Upa-Purāṇas*, vol. I, p. 31.

[1016]. Banerjea, op. cit., p. 109.

[1017]. Cook, A.B., *Zeus*, I.332.

[1018]. Keith, op. cit., p. 67.

[1019]. Banerjea, op. cit., p. 137.

[1020]. Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 155.

[1021]. VII.63.4—*divo rukma urucakṣā udeti.*

Lotus:—The lotus is also employed in the Vedic rituals probably to symbolise the fertility aspect of the Sun-god. There is a reference to the lotus-wreath which has twelve flowers[1028] because there are twelve months in a year. The solar-symbolism is clear. It is further said that it should be given to the Udagātri because he is sun-like. By the gift of this wreath the sun dawns upon him. The Aśvins are specifically called as wreathed in the lotuses.[1029] In the *Agnicayana* there is a provision for the placing of a lotus-leaf in the first layer in the centre.[1030] Since it is employed in association with the gold plate which was definitely a symbol of the Sun it is reasonable to suppose that the lotus leaf was also a symbol of the Sun in its procreative aspect. The association of the lotus and the Sun is indicated in the *Atharvaveda.*[1031] In the post-Vedic Sun-worship the lotus was definitely a symbol of the Sun-god.[1032] A circular white hide is also a symbol of the Sun.[1033] The white colour was sacred to the Sun-god and was employed as his symbol. Generally a white horse[1034] or a white cow[1035] or a white round skin[1036] is employed to symbolise the Sun. These symbols served as fetishes of the Sun-god.

[1022] Bloomfield, *Rigveda Repetitions*, p. 324.

[1923] *Ayaṁ Sūryo rukmo rocamāna...Yadvā divoantarikṣasya rukma ābharaṇasthānīyaḥ.* Max Müller, op. cit., III, p. 135.

[1024] Macdonell & Keith, *Vedic Index*, vol. II, p. 224; cf. Zimmer, *Altindische Leben*, 260, 263.

[1025] *P.B.*, XVIII.9.9; *S.B.*, VII.4.1.10—*atha rukmaṁ upadadhāti/ asao va āditya eṣa rukma...*; III.5.1.20; V.2.1.21, V.4.1.13, *T.S.*, IV.2.8; *V.S.*, XIII.3; *T.S.B.*, V.2.7.1; *K.S.B.*, XX.5; *M.S.B.*, III.2.6; *B.S.S.*, X.30; *Ap.S.S.*, XVI.22.3; *Vaik.Sr.S.*, XXIX/XVIII.17 *Satyāsādha Śrauta Sūtra*; XI.7. 20; *Kāt. Sr. S.*, XVII.74.

[1026] *S.B.*, III.9.2.9; XII.4.4.6; *A.B.*, VII.12.

[1027] *S.B.*, XII.4.4.4,6.

[1028] *P.B.*, XVIII.9.6-8. It is significant to remind that the worship of the Sun by means of twelve petalled lotus was a prominent feature of Purāṇic Sun-worship; cf. Srivastava, V.C., Purāṇic Records on the Sun-Worship *Purāṇa*, pt. XI, No. 2, pp. 240—42.

Fetishes as Precursors of Icons:

On many early coins[1037] symbols such as the wheel, the disc, the lotus, etc. are found represented. The date of some of these coins may coincide with the later Vedic period.[1038] Therefore, it is not unnatural to suggest that these representations were inspired by the Vedic tradition to which they provide the corroborative evidences. In view of the fact that these material objects were the symbols of the Sun-god only for the time they were employed in the rituals outside which their significance was never religious, they can not be images. But they may be regarded as the precursors of later icons. The question of the image-worship in the Vedic age is a very complicated issue but the general trend as evidenced by the Vedic texts appears to be aniconic.[1039] There is a very significant reference in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* which needs investigation in this matter. In the *Agnicayana* sacrifice there is a provision for the placing of a gold-man,[1040] a gold plate and a lotus-leaf. The gold-man is the representative of the Sun as the supreme power in the universe. In the *Rigveda* itself the concept of the Sun as the supreme power was developed and the *hiraṇya-garbha*-hymn shows that there was a belief that the Sun-god is the creator par-excellence. The concept of a gold-man in the Sun is a very prominent theme of the Upaniṣads.[1041] The symbolism employed in the *Agnicayana* appears to be solar. The lotus leaf is symbolic of the generative aspect of the Sun. The goldplate is the representative of the solar orb and the gold-man is the Upaniṣadic *Puruṣa* that is in the Sun and that is the ultimate reality. This interpretation accords with the symbolic nature of the *Agni-cayana*.[1042] In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* itself it is said that the gold-man is the representative of the man in the solar orb.[1043] Sāyaṇa says that the gold-man should be made of the figure of a man.[1044] This reference clearly indicates that some sort of the image of the god was made and placed in the first layer. Even if it was some sort of the image it cannot be called a regular image as it was made for a particular purpose and it had no value outside the ritual for which it was meant. It was something of the sort of *vimba* or *Sandris pratikriti* or *pratimā* in unconventional sense. But it shows that the tradition of the image-making was known in the later Vedic period. Since the image-worship had no locus standi in the Vedic sacrificial system it could not become popular among the Vedic circles. The terms indicative of the temple and the image start occuring in the Grihya Sūtras but there is no literary evidence for the existence of the regular image of the Sun. The image in its conventionalised sense means *arcā* the object of regular worship.[1045] In view of the fact that there are representations of the Sun in human form on the Mauryan pottery[1046] and actual specimen of the Sun-images of the 1st or 2nd Cent. B.C.[1047] have been found it can be said that by the end of the Sūtra period the iconic tradition was followed by a section of the people most probably outside the Vedic-fold.

[1029] *A.G.S.*, I.15.2; *P.G.S.*, II.4.8; *H.G.S.*, 1.2.6.

[1030] *T.S.*, IV.2.8; *K.S.*, XVI.15; *V.S.*, XIII.2; *T.S.B.*, 2.6.5; *K.S.B.*, XX.5; M.S.B., III.2.6; *S.B.*, VII.4.1.7; *Baud.S.S.*, X.30; *Ap.S.S.*, XVI.22.2; *Vaik. Sr.S.*, XXIX/XVIII.17; *Sat.Sr.S.*, 7.18; *Kat.S.S.*, XVII.73.

[1031] *A.V.*, XIII.3.10.

[1032] *Purāṇa,* XI., No. 2, p. 241.

[1033] *P.B.*, V.5.17–*Śvetaṁ carma parimaṇḍalaṁ syād ādityasya rūpaṁ. Drah.*, XI.3.4.7.

[1034] *A.B.*, VI.35.

[1035] *T.S.*, V.6.11.

[1036] Keith, *T.S.*, I., p. CXXXI.

[1037] See Allan, J., *B.M.C.*, pt. I, class II, p. XX-1-3; pt. II, p. XXII; Smith, V.A., *C.I.M.*, p. 132. Durga Prasad, Classification and Significance of the Silver Punchmarked coins of Ancient India, *J.A.S.B.*, New Series, vol. XXX, No. 3; Numismatic Supplement, No. XLV.

[1038] Gupta, P.L., *Coins,* pp. 10-11 dates the earliest series to the 8th Cent. B.C

[1039] Banerjea, J.N., op. cit., pp. 42, 58.

[1040] *T.S.,* 4.2.8; *V.S.* XIII.4; *T.S.B.,* V.2.7.2.*K.S.B.,* XX.5; *M.S.B.,* III.2.6; *S.B.,* VII.4.1.15; *B.S.S.,* X.30; *Ap.S.S.,* XVI.22.3; *Vaik. S.S.,* XXIX/XVIII.17; *Sat.Sr.S.,* XI.7.21; *Kat.Sr.S.,* XVII.75.

[1041] *C.U.,* 1.6.6—*ya eṣo antarāditе hiraṇyamayaḥ puruṣo drisyate.*

[1042] Sharma, G.R., *The Excavations at Kauśāmbī,* p. 107.

[1043] VII.4.1.17; See, Sāyaṇa on *S.B.,* VII.4.1.17; Weber (ed), *S.B.,* p. 631.

SOCIAL ASPECT OF SUN-WORSHIP

The worship of the Sun under one name or the other forms an important and essential theme of almost all the social and religious rites and ceremonies of the Vedic society. It is symptomatic of the popularity of Sun-worship in Vedic India.

Sun-Worship in The Marriage Ceremony:

In the marriage ceremony the worship of the Sun is prescribed at different occasions. Aryamān as the guardian of unmarried girls is prayed to release the bride from his guardianship and give her to the bridegroom.[1048] Pūṣan, another Sun-god is invoked to lead the bride safely.[1049] Mitra, Viṣṇu and Sūrya along with other gods are invoked to protect the couple.[1050] After marriage the bridegrooms offer oblations for three days in the morning to Prajāpati but according to some the morning oblation is meant for Sūrya.[1051] On the fourth night towards the morning the husband offers oblations with prayers to the Sun for expiation.[1052] Śāṁkhāyana[1053] prescribes that after marriage when the couple have reached home four oblations should be offered of which one goes to Sūrya.

[1044] *S.B.*, VII.4.1.15; Weber, op. cit., p. 630.

[1045] Banerjea, op. cit., p. 39.

[1046] *J.I.S.O.A.*, III, No. 2, p. 125.

[1047] Banerjea, op. cit., p. 432.

Sun-Worship in The Initiation Ceremony:

The role of the Sun-god is much more important in the initiation ceremony. The worship of the Sun under the name of Savitri is an essential constituent of this ceremony. When the teacher takes charge of the student many solar deities like Savitri, Pūṣan and the Aśvins are invoked.[1054] The recitation of the Gāyatrī hymn sacred to Savitri (*R.V.*, III.62.10) is the most important part of the ceremony.[1055] Sūrya is invoked to bestow insight and radiance on the student.[1056] It is prescribed by a few teachers that the student should look to the Sun and recite the hymn sacred to him[1057] (*V.S.*, XXVI.24). The worship of the Sun is prescribed when the student's charge is given to the Sun.[1058] The worship of the Sun is prescribed at the reopening of the Vedic study as well[1059] as at the end of the studentship.[1060]

[1048] A.G.S., I.4.8; I.7.13; G.G.S., II.2.7; *P.G.S.*, I.6.3; *H.G.S.*, I.6.20. The last two bring Bhaga also in this connection.

[1049] *A.G.S.*, I.7.19; *S.G.S.*, I.11.4; *G.G.S.*, II.2.7; *P.G.S.*, I.4. 16; *H.G.S.*, I.6.20.2.

[1050] *P.G.S.*, I.4.16; *G.G.S.*, I.11.4; *H.G.S.*, I.6.21; cf. *P.G.S.*, I.8.2; *H.G.S.*, I.6.20.9.

[1051] *H.G.S.*, I.7.23.9.

[1052] *H.G.S.*, I.7.24; *S.G.S.*, I.18.2; *P.G.S.*, I.11.2; *G.G.S.*, II.2.7.

[1053] *S.G.S.*, I.16.3.

[1054] *S.G.S.*, II.2.12; *A.G.S.*, I.20.4; *G.G.S.*, II.10.26; Bhaga, Aryamān, Mitra etc. are also invoked, *S.G.S.*, II.3.1.

[1055] *S.G.S.*, II.5; *A.G.S.*, I.21, 4–6; P.G.S., II.3.4; *H.G.S.*, I.6. 6.

[1056] *A.G.S.*, I.21.4.

Sun-Worship in Other Rites:

In all the *Saṁskāras* the worship of the Sun is prescribed.[1061] In the Keśānta and Cūḍākarman ceremonies Savitri is invoked.[1062] For a valiant male child the hymn sacred to the Sun (*V.S.*, XII.4) is to be recited.[1063] After one month of the child-birth the parents sacrifice to many deities of which many are solar—Bhaga, Aryamān, Savitri, Mitra, Pūṣan and the Aśvins.[1064] In the fourth month the child is made to look at the sun while the worship of the Sun by means of the muttering of the hymn goes on.[1065]

Sun-Worship in The Daily Life:

. It is enjoined that every house-holder should offer oblations daily in the morning to the Sun-god.[1066] On many occasions in daily life the worship of the Sun is prescribed for expiation, such as in the case of a person who sees a bad dream,[1067] or who rises after the sun-rise,[1068] or who is in some danger.[1069] For the purification of the Kuśa grass[1070] and for winning co-wives[1071] such worship is prescribed.

[1057] *P.G.S.*, II.2.15.

[1058] *H.G.S.*, 1.7.13.

[1059] *S.G.S.*, II.7.8,9.

[1060] *P.G.S.*, II.6.15. In the *utsarga* ceremony the worship of the Sun is to be done. The murmuring of the hymns sacred to the Sun (*R.V.*, 1.50; I.115; X.37; X.158) are to be done; *S.G.S.*, IV.1.4.

[1061] See Pandey, Raj Bali, *Hindu Saṁskāras*.

[1062] *H.G.S.*, II.1.6; *P.G.S.*, II. 1.9.

[1063] *G.G.S*, II.9.10; *S.G.S.*, I.28.15; *P.G.S.*, I.14.5.

[1064] *S.G.S.*, 1.26.9–15,26,27.

[1065] *P.G.S.*, I.17.6. In other schools the Sun was replaced by the Moon. cf. *K.G.S.*, II.3.1.

[1066] *A.G.S.*, I.9.7; *S.G.S.*, I.3.14; *G.G.S.*, IV.6.12,14; IV.9.4.

[1067] *A.G.S.*, III.6.5; *G.G.S.*, III.3.22.

[1068] *A.G.S.*, III.7.1,2; *G.G.S.*, I.7.6–9.

The *Saṁdhyā* is prescribed for every twiceborn householder. It is the spiritualised form of Sun-worship. The solar nature of the obligation is clear when it is said that the morning prayer is to begin before the sun-rise and should be carried till the disc of the Sun is seen on the horizon while the evening prayer begins when the disc of the Sun is about to set and goes on till the appearance of stars.[1072] The muttering of *Gāyatrī* hymn is the central point in it. It has already been shown that the *Gāyatrī* hymn was a prayer to the Sun-light which symbolised the ultimate light and the source of life.

It is to be done facing towards the east in the morning and the north-east in the evening.[1073] It shows the solar nature. An *arghya* to the Sun is also prescribed.[1074] In view of the fact that the *Saṁdhyā* was to be done according to the procedure laid down in the Grihya and the Dharmasūtras daily by every twice born Hindu,[1075] it may be said that Sun-worship in its spiritualized form was a very important feature of the social life. Without it the life of an individual was incomplete.

Sun-Worship in Seasonal Ceremonies:

Besides these daily observances there are various seasonal ceremonies and festivals in which Sun-worship figures prominently. At the partaking of the first fruits of the harvest the worship of the Sun is prescribed by means of the hymns

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[1069] *A.G.S.*, III.11.1.

[1070] *S.G.S.*, I.8.21; *A.G.S.*, I.3.3; *G.G.S.*, II.6.7.

[1071] *Ap.G.S.*, 3.9.9.

[1072] *A.G.S.*, III.7.4,6; *S.G.S.*, II.9.

[1073] *A.G.S.*, III.7.4–6; *S.G.S.*. II.9.1; *M.G.S.*, I.2.2.

[1074] *M.G.S.*, I.2.1–5.

[1075] For details see Pandey, R.B., op. cit.; Kane, P.V., *H.D.S.*, vol. II, pp. 315–21.

(*R.V.*, VII.66.16) sacred to Sūrya.[1076] In the house-building ceremony Sun-worship, inter alia, is prescribed.[1077]

Pūṣan is invoked in many agricultural festivals.[1078] In the *Śrāvaṇa* ceremony—a ceremony to appease the serpents, the adoration to Sūrya, the red one, the lord of celestial beings, is prescribed.[1079] In the funeral ceremony the worship of the Sun along with others is prescribed by means of the recitation of hymns sacred to the Sun.[1080] The Sun is worshipped in ceremonies aimed at the fulfilment of certain desires.[1081]

This synoptic view of the role of the Sun-gods in various domestic rituals leaves no room for doubt that Sun-worship under different names had been a very popular theme in the daily life of the common peoples[1082] of the Vedic society.

Āditya-Vrata:—It is well known that the solar vows played a very important role in the Purāṇic Sun-worship.[1083] They do not figure as such in the Vedic Sun-worship. But there is a reference to an *Āditya-vrata* in the *Gobhila Grihyasūtra*.[1084] It is relevant to examine its nature and relation to the later *Sauravratas* of the Purāṇas. This *vrata* has been prescribed for a student. Its follower is expected to wear one garment only and was not allowed to have anything between himself and the Sun except the trees and the roof of the houses and not to descend into water deeper than knee-deep except on the injunction of his teacher. Thus a sort of discipline was prescribed for the proper performance of the studies. There is no religious feeling behind the vow. It differs from the solar vows of the Purāṇas in the sense that it is a sort of physical discipline while the latter is an act of ritual in which mental discipline is prominent.

[1076] *S.G.S.*, III.8.7.

[1077] *H.G.S.*, I.8.27.1; II.1.4.16.

[1078] *A.G.S.*, IV.8; *P.G.S.*, III.8.

[1079] *H.G.S.*, IV.16.4.

[1080] *S.G.S.*, IV.1.8; *A.G.S.*, IV.6.18; *H.G.S.*, II.5.14.3.

[1081] *G.G.S.*, IV.6.10.

[1082] Apte, V.M., op. cit., p. 235; Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras*, p. 464.

[1083] Srivastava, V.C., *Purāṇa*, XI, No. 2, pp. 240—42.

[1084] III.1.28.

Sun-Worship in Śrautayajñas:

Many scholars in the past have traced the solar nature of many *Śrautyajñas*.[1085] A brief review of them from the point of view of Sun-worship will reveal the place of the Sun-gods in the aristocratic circles of the Vedic society. The ceremony for the setting up of the sacred fires employs the solar symbolism.[1086] The *Agnihotra* may rightly be regarded as a spell to aid the rising of the Sun.[1087] In the seasonal sacrifice Pūṣan and Savitri are among the five deities whom libations are offered.[1088] The ceremony is followed by an offering to Sūrya. The Sun-gods find place in many Soma sacrifices.[1089] Sūrya, Āditya, Savitri, Pūṣan, Mitra, Aryamān and the Aśvins are invoked in them in a mechanical manner. The solar symbolism have also been seen in the *Aśvamedha* and the *Vājapeya* sacrifices.[1090] In the *Agnicayana* there are direct references to the worship of the Sun by means of various symbols. In the *Atharvaveda* there are references to the simple sacrifices known as *Savas*. In many of these the symbolic worship of the Sun was resorted to.[1091] Thus it can be said that besides the common masses the aristocratic circles also worshipped the Sun-gods in connection with various sacrifices. No doubt there was no independent worship of the Sun outside the institution of *Yajña*. Thus from the time of the concep tion till the death and even after, the Sun-gods were worshipped at different occasions in life.

[1085] See, Keith, A.B., *T.S.*, p. CIV-CXXIX; *R.P.V.U.*, vol. II, 318—357.

[1086] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 316.

[1087] Ibid., p. 318; see, *Ap.S.S.*, VI; *B.S.S.*, III.4.9; *M.S.S.*, I.6; *K.S.S.*, IV.12—15; *S.S.S.*, III.7.—12; *A.S.S.*, II.2-5; *Vait.S.S.*, VII; cf. Weber, *I.S.*, X.329.

[1088] *Ap.S.S.*, VIII; *B.S.S.*, V; *M.S.S.*, I.7; *K.S.S.* V; *A.S.S.*, II.15—20; *S.S.S.*, III.13—18; *Vait.*, VIII.8.

[1089] *Ap.S.S.*, X-XIII; XIV.8.12; *B.S.S.*, VI—VIII; *M.S.S.*, II; *K.S.S.*, VII—XI.1; *A.S.S.*, IV—VI; *S.S.S.*, I.11; V.5ff; *B.S.S.* XVII.31.8; *M.S.S.*, V.2.4.11; see Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, pp. 328—38.

[1090] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, pp. 339, 347.

[1091] Shende, op. cit., pp. 179—190.

THE METHOD OF SUN-WORSHIP

The worship of the Sun-gods like those of others consisted of the recitation of the hymns and the offerings.[1092] Firstly, the recitation of the hymns constituted one of the most important elements in the Vedic worship. Broadly speaking, the hymns were of two types. They were either the prayer or the praise. There are internal evidences in the *Rigveda* and the later Vedic texts to this effect. At one place it is said for the Aśvins that their ancient worshippers adore them, the offering is poured upon the sacred grass and the hymn is ready for the repetition.[1093] It is prayed that Mitra and Varuṇa may accept the rite with praise and oblation.[1094] Similarly, Viṣṇu's praise is to be recited repeatedly and oblations are to be offered.[1095] The Ādityas are invoked by means of the oblations and hymns.[1096] Savitri is worshipped by the sacrifice and the sacred hymns.[1097] Savitri is praised by the hymns.[1098] It is said that a new hymn is prepared for Pūṣan.[1099] At another place it is said that this devoted worshipper praises you, the Aśvins, with hymns.[1100] The hymns to Sūrya, for example, are generally connected with his praise. The hymn I.50 of the

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1092. Wilson, H.H. (Tr.), *Rigveda,* vol. I, Intr. pp. XXI–XXIII.

1093. *R.V.*, I.117.1.

1094. Ibid., I.151.3.

1095. Ibid., I.156.1,2.

1096. Ibid., II.27.1.

1097. Ibid., III.62.3.

1098. Ibid., V.82.7.

1099. Ibid., VI.62.5.

1100. Ibid., VII.68.9.

Rigveda glorifies throughout except in the last three *sūktas* (Nos. 11, 12, 13) the activities of the Sun. The last three *sūktas* are examples of the prayer of the worshipper for the removal of deseases. Similarly the hymn I.115 of the *Rigveda* is a praise for Sūrya except in the last *sūkta* where a prayer to deliver us from the sin is done. At many places the deeds of the Aśvins are praised and the next moment they are prayed to protect us.[1101] There is no necessity to multiply the examples as even a casual reader of the Vedic hymns will be convinced that the hymns are either the praise or the prayer. In the Brāhmaṇas, the Śrauta and the Grihya-sūtras the recitation of the hymns sacred to the Sun-god is mentioned.[1102] In the Sūtras the hymns were to be murmurred and not recited. The name for this practice was the *japa* which is a development of the practice of the recitation of the hymns followed in the earlier Vedic texts. To illustrate it the case of the *utsarga* ceremony may be mentioned where it is said that the hymns sacred to the Sun are to be murmurred.[1103] The Grihya-sūtras are full of references to the *japa* of the hymns sacred to the Sun. A detailed knowledge of the procedures of Sun-worship may be gleaned from the study of the constituents of the *Saṁdhyopāsanā* or *Saṁdhyā* or *Saṁdhyāvandanā* which is a form of Sun-worship. The constituents of the *Saṁdhyā* were the *japa*[1104]—the muttering of the Gāīyatri hymn, the *arghya*,[1105] the *ācamana*[1106]—cleansing the month, the *prāṇāyāma*,[1107] the inhalation and exhalation of the air, the *mārjana*,[1108] the *aghamarṣana*[1109] and the *upasthāna*.[1110]

[1101] *R.V.*, VII.68; VII.70.

[1102] *S.G.S.*, II.5; III.8.7, III.9.1.3, V.5; V.7; VI.4.1; VI.6.1. Similar references are found in all the Grihya sūtras. See, Kane, P.V., op. cit.

[1103] *S.G.S.*, VI.6.4—*Sauryāṇi japitvā.*

[1104] *Ap.D.S.*, I.1.9.23,26.14, 27.1; *G.D.S.*, 1.12.55; *B.D.S.*, II.5.8.11; II.10.1.7–14.

[1105] *G.D.S.*, V.32.

[1106] *Ap.D.S.*, I.5.15, 2.11, 16.1.6; *G.D.S.*, I.35–40.

[1107] *G.D.S.*, I.50; *B.D.S.*, IV.1.30; *V.D.S.*, 25.13.

[1108] *B.G.S.*, II.4.2.

[1109] *B.D.S.*, III.5.1–7.

[1110] Ibid., II.4.7.11.

In the Grihyasūtras the emphasis is given on the *japa*[1111] but in the Dharmasūtras elaborate rules have been evolved for other elements[1112] also. Since the *Saṁdhyā* was the ideal worship for every twice born householder it may be said that the general worship of the Sun also involved these procedures.

Secondly, the offerings were either the oblations or the libations. The oblations consisted of clarified butter poured on fire while the libation was that of the Soma juice sprinkled either on the fire or sometimes on the ground or sometimes on the sacred grass strewed on the floor. There are references to the libation to the Aśvins on the grass.[1113] It is asked to offer with the fire the acceptable libation of Mitra.[1114] The Aśvins are invoked to come on a marked piece of the earth.[1115] It is said that the Kaṇvas poured out libations to Savitri.[1116] Sūrya is connected with the Soma juice.[1117] Thus all the gods are connected with the libation of the Soma juice which was an essential part of the Vedic ritual. Pūṣan provides an exception in this respect. He was given a different food—*karambha*. There are references to the oblations[1118] of clarified butter to the Sun-gods. Thus it is asked to offer the oblations of clarified butter to Mitra.[1119] The oblations are offered to the Ādityas,[1120] to Viṣṇu,[1121] to the Aśvins.[1122] It is said of Sūrya that he rises after the *Swadhā* offerings.[1123]

1111. *M.G.S.,* I.2.1 refers to the *arghya* to the Sun in addition to the *japa*.
1112. For details of these elements see, P. V. Kane, op. cit., pp. 315–321; *B.D.S.,* II.4.7ff.
1113. *R.V.,* I.3.3, I.34.7, I.47.4, I.116.1, I.117.1.
1114. Ibid., III.59.2.
1115. Ibid., VII.70.1.
1116. Ibid., I.44.8.
1117. Ibid., X.170.1.
1118. Ibid., VI.51.1; *T.S.,* II. 6.8.
1119. Ibid., III.59.1.
1120. Ibid., II.27.1.
1121. Ibid., I.156.1.
1122. Ibid., I.153.6; X.108.1.
1123. Ibid., X.37.4.

In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* there are references to the oblations and libations to Āditya,[1124] Sūrya,[1125] Pūṣan,[1126] Savitri and the Aśvins.[1127] In case of Sūrya and Savitri salutations and meditation are also referred to as the methods of the worship. The horses of the Sun are object of reverence. They are to be saluted.[1128] This practice appears to have given birth to *Sūryanamaskāra* which became a very important mode of Sun-worship in later Hinduism. *Sūryadarśana,* the beholding of the Sun which came to be a patent method of Sun-worship in Hinduism is also indicated in the *Rigveda* when the beholding of the light of Sūrya is mentioned.[1129] In the Upaniṣads it is said that the worshipper gazes on the orb of the Sun.[1130] Savitri is invoked by the means of salutation.[1131] He is the object of meditation.[1132] Sūrya is also said to be the object of meditation.[1133] In the Upaniṣads there are many references to the meditation of the Sun.[1134]

The worship of the Sun-gods was essentially domestic in the *Rigveda.* At several occasions the Sun-gods are prayed to come to the dwelling of the worshipper. It is said that the abode of the offerer is not far from the Aśvins.[1135] The Aśvins come to the dwelling of the worshipper.[1136]

[1124] *T.S.,* I.8.7.

[1125] Ibid., I.8.2.

[1126] Ibid., I.8.8.

[1127] Ibid.

[1128] *R.V.,* I.115.3—*Bhadrā aśvā haritaḥ Sūryasya citrā etagvā anumādyāsaḥ/ namasyanto diva ā priṣṭhamasthuḥpari dyāvāprithvī yanti sadyaḥ//*

[1130] *Maitrī U..* I.2.

[1131] *R.V.,* II.38.9—*Huve devaṁ Savitāraṁ namobhiḥ* VI.51.9—*tama namobhir, T.S.,* IV.1.11.

[1132] Ibid., II.38.10; III.62.10; V.82.8.

[1133] Ibid., X.177.1.

[1134] *C.U.,* II.9.

[1135] *R.V.,* I.22.4.

[1136] Ibid., I.183.1; VII.67.10; X.40.3.

There is no reference to the temple or any place of community-worship in the early Vedic texts.[1137]

Occasions of Sun-Worship :

Sun-worship is to be done either once in the morning or twice in the morning and the evening or thrice at the dawn, the noon and the evening. There are indications of the three occasions of Sun-worship as early as the *Rigveda*. The Aśvins are prayed to be present with us thrice today.[1138] They repair the faults of their worshipper thrice.[1139] They are to be worshipped thrice.[1140] There are references to the worship of Savitri in the morning and the evening.[1411] Viṣṇu is said to be present at the three connected periods.[1142] Once it is said that the Aśvins are to be worshipped in the morning.[1143] The Ādityas are connected with three ceremonies.[1144] Savitri descends from the heaven thrice at the sacrifice.[1145] There is a reference to the pouring of Soma to Savitri[1146] thrice. The Aśvins are invoked thrice at the dawn, the noon and the night.[1147]

In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa the* rationale of the three times of Sun-worship is given in connection with the *Agniṣṭoma*. It is said[1148] that the recitation of the hymns should be in accordance with the movement of the Sun. In the morning when the sun rises he gives a gentle heat, therefore, he should recite in a gentle tone. At the mid-day he gives stronger heat, then he should recite with a stronger tone. Then he comes still forward he gives his strongest heat, therefore, he should recite with the strongest tone. There are references to the two times of the morning and the evening for the worship of the Sun.[1149] In the Upaniṣads there are direct references to three occasions for Sun-worship. Kauṣītaki used to worship the Sun thrice, in the morning, the noon and the evening.[1150] At another place it is mentioned that the Sun as the symbol of Brahman should be worshipped at seven different times of the day.[1151] These seven times are the pre-rise, the post-rise, the cow-gathering, the mid-day, the past mid-day, past afternoon and the post-sun-set.

[1137] There is one significant reference in the *R.V.*, VII.36.1 where it is said in connection with the Sun that the prayers proceed from the hall of the sacrifice—*Pr Brahmaitu sadanātri tasya vi raśmibhiḥ sasrije sūryo gāḥ*. It may simply mean the sacrifical place, not the temple.

[1138] *R.V.*, I.34.1.

[1139] Ibid., I.34.3.

[1140] Ibid., I.34.7.

[1141] Ibid., I.35.10; IV.54.1.

[1142] Ibid., I.156.5.

[1143] Ibid., I.184.1; V.77.1.

[1144] Ibid., II.27.8.

[1145] Ibid., III.54.11.

[1146] Ibid., IV.54.6.

[1147] Ibid., V.76.3; VIII.22.14.

[1148] *A.B.*, III.44.

It appears that in the beginning the *Saṁdhyā* was to be done twice—once in the morning and again in the evening,[1152] but later on three times, the morning, the noon and the evening, came to be prescribed for its performance.[1153]

SOME SUN-WORSHIPPING SAINTS

Some saints appear to have been devoted to Sun-worship more intimately than the others in the Vedic tradition. The names of the authors of the hymns to Sūrya in the *Rigveda* are given by the *Brihaddevatā* as follows: *Priskaṇvaḥ,*[1154] *Kutsa Āṅgirasa,*[1155] *Dīrghatamaḥ,*[1156] *Vāmadeva Gauta-*

[1149] *K.B.*, II.2, II.8.

[1150] *K.U.*, II.7—*Athātaḥ Sarvajitaḥ Kauṣītakestrīṇyupāsanāni bhavanti.*

[1151] *C.U.*, II.9.8—*ādityaṁ sapta-vidhaṁ samopāste.*

[1152] *A.G.S.*, IV.7.4–6; *S.G.S.*, II.9; *G.D.S.*, I.11.17.

[1153] *G.G.S.*, IV.6.2; Atri, quoted by Aparārka, p. 49 prescribes the performance of the three *Saṁdhyās*.

[1154] *R.V.*, I.50.

[1155] Ibid.. I.115.

[1156] Ibid., I.164.

maḥ,[1157] *Atriḥ*[1158] *Avatsāraḥ*[1159] *Vasiṣṭhaḥ*[1160] *Abhitapas Sauryaḥ,*[1161] *Cakṣuḥ Sauryaḥ,*[1162] *Vibhrāṭ Sauyaḥ.*[1163] Of these the last three are exclusively mentioned in connection with the Sun-god. They have not been connected with any other god in the *Rigveda.* In all these cases they have been called as the son of Sūrya. The meaning of their personal names is connected with the Sun as *abhitapas* means the illuminating or the scorching one, *cakṣuḥ* means the eye, and *vibbrāṭ* means the illuminating one. Thus they belong to a family of the Sun-worshippers and they themselves are the worshippers of the Sun. Many instances may be cited of the persons who on account of their extreme devotion to a particular deity put on a name which is either identical with the deity or is associated with some aspect of the gods. It is a quite popular practice in the sectarian circles of India. In view of the facts that there are no other traces of any sectarian basis for Sun-worship in the Vedic literature and no other details of them are found anywhere it is difficult to say that they were sectarian Sun-worshippers but it is also to be remembered that the mention of their father as Sūrya and the adoption of names expressive of the qualities of the Sun cannot be just a chance. The hymns of which they are the authors—all occur in the tenth *maṇḍala.* Since this *maṇḍala* is the latest in the *Rigveda,*[1164] and the earliest authority for their authorship is the *Brihaddevatā* which can hardly be placed later than 400 B.C.[1165] it can be said that in the later Vedic period a few special Sun-worshipping saints had emerged who were extremely devoted to the Sun-god. This point becomes clear when we remember that in the Upaniṣads there was a school of philosophers which sincerely believed in the supremacy of the Sun-god.[1166] In the *Ārṣeya Upaniṣad*[1167] Bharaddvāja is shown as holding this view. It is not to be forgotten that the Bharaddvājas were specially connected with Pūṣan—a Sun-god. It is alleged by Gautama against Bharaddvāja that he is holding that view of Brahman which is being held by the *Puṇḍras*, the *Suhmas*, the *Uḍumbaras*, the *Dardas* and the *Barbaras*. The *Puṇḍras* were probably the outcaste.[1168] The *Dardas* may be identified with *Dardas* or *Dardicae* mentioned by Herodotus in his list of the tribes of the Achaemenid province in India.[1169] The term *Barbara* is generally used to designate an uncivilized person. It means non-Aryan also.[1170] It is to be remembered that Babbar, a contracted form from Barbar (bar=to shine) is one of the names of the Sun-god in the Babylonian inscriptions.[1171] The Barbaras mentioned in the Indian literature may be probably connected with some Sun-worshipping tribe of Babylonia but the evidence at our disposal is too meagre and fragmentary to arrive at any final decision. But it can be safely said that there was a class of peoples probably non-Āryan which believed in the worship of the Sun as the highest in the Upaniṣads. Bharaddvājas appear to have been the spokesmen of this stratum of the Vedic society.

[1157] *R.V.,* IV.13,31,40.

[1158] Ibid., V.40.

[1159] Ibid., V.44.

[1160] Ibid., VII.60, 62, 63, 66.

[1161] Ibid., X.37.

[1162] Ibid., X.158.

[1163] Ibid., X.170.

[1164] Keith, *R.P.V.U.,* p. 2.

[1165] Macdonell, A.A., *The Brihad-devatā* (1965 Ed.), Intr. p. XXIII.

Ghora Āṅgirasa, a saint and the teacher of Krisṇa, the son of Devakī was another Sun-worshipping saint of the

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[1166] See, Barua, B.M., *Pre Buddhistic Indian Philosophy;* cf. *B.A.U.*, II.3.1; *Maitrī U.*, VI.3; *C.U.*, II.19.1—*Ādityo brahmetyādeśaḥ.*

[1167] Quoted by Ranade, R.D. & Belvalkar, op. cit., p. 298.

[1168] Macdonell & Keith, *Vedic Index,* p. 531; cf. *A.B.*, XV.26; *B.D.S.*, I.2. In the Epics their country corresponds with Bengal and Bihar.

[1169] *C.H.I.*, vol. I, p. 303.

[1170] Macdonell, *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary,* p. 192.

[1171] Jastrow, M., op. cit., pp. 72-73.

Upaniṣads. Though he is referred to as the author of many hymns of the *Rigveda* there is no special connection between him and Sun-worship in the *Rigveda*. However, in the Upaniṣads he is one of those saints who believed that the Sun is the highest spirit. He instructs that in the final hour one should take refuge in these three thoughts—thou art the indestructible, thou art the unshaken, thou art the essence of life. Proceeding from the primeaval light they see the morning light that shines higher than the sky. Seeing beyond the darkness the higher light, seeing the higher light we attain to the Sun, the god among gods, the highest light, Yea, the highest spirit.[1172] Since this saint is connected with the *Atharvaveda*[1173] which is taken as the Veda of the commoners it may be said that the Sun was worshipped as the highest in some non-aristocratic circles whose representative was Ghora Āṅgirasa.

Dripta-Bālāki of the Gārgya clan worshipped Brahman as the person in the moon and the sun.[1174] He represents the earlier view regarding the whole nature as godly while Ajātaśatru with whom he conversed regards Brahman as the supreme reality.

Kauṣītaki appears to have been a great Sun-worshipper with a methodology. He used to worship 'the rising Sun having performed the investiture with the sacred thread, having fetched water, having thrice sprinkled the water vessel saying, 'you are deliverer, deliver us from my sin'. In the same manner he used to worship the Sun when it was in the middle of the sky. In the same manner he used to worship the Sun when it was setting. According to him one who knows this his sin is removed by the Sun.[1175] He suggests to his son: 'Reflect on the various rays, varily, you will have many sons'.[1176] Thus Kauṣītaki was an ardent worshipper of the Sun.

[1172] *C.U.*, III.17.7—*Uttaraṁ devaṁ devatrā Sūryam ganṁ.*

[1173] Ghora Āṅgirasa means the dread descendant of the Āṅgirasas—a counterpart of Bhiṣaj Ātharvana the healing descendant of Ātharvans. *Atharvano vedah* is connected with *Ghoraṁ* in *Riksūtras* cf. *A.S.S.* X.7, *S.S.S.* XVI.2. He is accordingly the representative of the dark side of the practice of the *A.V.*, Hillebrandt. op. cit., Vol. II, p. 160. Bloomfield, M. *Hymns of the Atharvaveda*, XX—XXI, XXXVIII.

[1174] *B.A.U.*, II.1.2; *Kaus.U.*, IV.6.

Vāmadeva—the seer of the *hamsavatī* hymn[1177] appears to be the worshipper of the Sun. According to him the Sun illumines the world and despells darkness.

Pippalāda identifies the Sun with life and moon. The Sun is regarded by him as the life of all creation[1178] and as the iord of the light.[1179]

Brahadratha, a king mentioned in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad* appears to have worshipped the Sun after performing extreme austerity. He starts his worship with uplifted arms gazing at the Sun.[1180] He was worshipping the Sun-god by means of yogic practices.

The foregoing account will leave no room for doubt that in spite of the fact that Sun-worship was of non-sectarian character there was a class of Sun-worshipping saints in the Vedic society who might have been representatives of the common masses including the non-Āryans also and who worshipped the Sun-god as the highest spirit.

Thus the worship of the Sun was in the nature of the *yajña* which consisted of the recitation of the hymns of the

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1175. *Kaus U.*, II.7—'*athataḥ sarva-jitaḥ kauṣītakes trīṇy upāsanāni bhavanti, sarva-jiddha sma kauṣītakirudyantaṁ ādityamupatiṣṭhate yajñopavītaṁ kritvodakaṁ āniya triḥ prasicyodapātraṁ vargoasi pāpamānaṁ me vriṅdhiti*...

1176. *C.U.*, I.5.2.

1177. *Kath. U.*, II.2; cf. *R.V.*, IV.40.5; *V.S.*, X.24; XII.14; *T.S.*, III.2.10.1; *S.B.*, VI.7.3.11.

1178. *Praśna U.*, 1.8.

1179. Ibid., II.9.

1180. *Maitrī U.*, 1.2. '*ādityaṁ udikṣamāna ūrdhvabāhus tiṣṭhati*...'

praise and the prayer and the offerings of the oblation of clarified butter and libation of Soma juice in the fire, on the ground or on the sacred grass. There was no real development of the concept of the image proper and the temple though the tradition had been developed of the worship of the symbols—*Vimba* or *pratīkāni*—of the Sun-god which was instrumental along with other factors for the development of the tradition of the image in later times. The worship was entirely domestic as the whole ceremony was performed in the house of the worshipper. It was non-sectarian also as simultaneously many gods were invoked and many of them in turn were lauded as the highest. The same priest glorifies the Sun as the highest deity and at the next moment he dethrones him and extols another god as the supreme. From the beginning one or two or three times of Sun-worship had been prescribed. The Sun was the object of meditation; and salutation and beholding of him are also prescribed from the earliest times. In the Sūtras a definite mode of Sun-worship involving the *japa,* the *arghya,* the *mārjana,* the *ācamana,* the *aghamarṣaṇa* and the *upasthāna* was evolved. A class of Sun-worshipping saints was also existing in the Vedic society.

CHAPTER IV

THE EPIC STREAM

If the view[1] that the *Mahābhārata* is nothing but the allegorical representation of the solar myth of war between light and darkness suffers from over-simplification of a complicated matter,[2] the thesis of Hopkins[3] that the Sun is worshipped in the Epics because he is a form of Viṣṇu, is equally guilty of underestimate of the true role of the Sun. No doubt, there is an intimate relationship between the Sun and Viṣṇu and the solar origin of the latter has not been forgotten in the Epics,[4] even then Sun-worship has an independent status. The Vaiṣṇavas and the Sauras are mentioned in the Epics as two different sects.[5] There is no denying the fact that the Sun is one of the eight significant gods of the Epics who had a sectarian following.[6]

In contrast to the non-exclusiveness of Vedic thought sectarianism[7] came to be one of the foremost features of the religious life of the Epics. Many sects are recognized in the *Mahābhārata* of which prominent ones are the Sauras, the Śāktas, the Gaṇeśas, the Śaivas and the Vaiṣṇavas.[8] The

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[1] *Woolner Commemoration Volume*, pp. 311—16. There are, no doubt, references to the conflict between the powers of light and darkness in the *Mahābhārata* (VII.146.144; XIV. 39.14) but such thoughts are common in other ancient works.

[2] Sukthankar, V.S., *On The Meaning of the Mahābhārata*, pp. 32—124.

[3] *R.I.*, pp. 377-78.

[4] Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 83.

[5] *MBH.*, XVIII.6.97; VII.82.16.

[6] Karmarkar, A.P., Religion and Philosophy of the Epics, *Cul.H.I.*, vol. II, p. 80.

[7] Hopkins, *G.E.I.*, pp. 84-85 refers to sectarian interpretation as one of the recognized schemes in the Epic philosophy.

[8] Ibid., p. 115.

Epic commentator[9] interprets *pañcamahākalpa,* applied to Viṣṇu, to mean scriptures, *āgamas,* of these sects.[10] The *Rāmāyaṇa*[11] is also full of references to the worship of sectarian gods. The growth of sectarian tradition in the Epics is attested by the inscriptions of Aśoka, early Buddhist, Jain and Greek literatures and Pāṇini and Patañjali.[12]

The Sun-Sect:

The Epics bring forth revolutionary changes in the concept of the Sun-god as well as in the method of his worship.[13] Firstly, he is the god of a sect. For the first time there is a specific reference to a Sun-sect known as *Sauras* in the *Mahābhārata.* It is said[14] that in the camp of the Pāṇḍus there were a thousand and eight others who were Sun-worshippers.[15] Besides this direct reference to a Sun-sect there are many descriptions in the Epics which tend to show the emergence of a full-grown sectarianism centering round the Sun-god. In the *Mahābhārata* there is a hymn[16] in praise of the Sun-god having 108 names which was communicated by Brahmā to Śakra, by Śakra to Nārada, by Nārada to Dhaumya and by Dhaumya to Yudhiṣṭhira.[17] All the characteristic features of a sectarian god are traceable in this legend of Yudhiṣṭhira's worship of the Sun-god. The Sun-god is invoked as the soul of all corporal existence and the origin of all existence,[18] the goal of all Sāṁkhyas and Yogins, the goal of emancipation,[19] the beginning and the end of the day of Brahmā.[20] He is the highest god, the lord of Manus and Manvantaras.[21] He is identified with all the great gods-Indra, Viṣṇu, Rudra and Prajāpati and even Brahmā.[22] In the list of 108 names Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Skanda, Varuṇa, Yama, Indra, Soma, etc. are included as names of the Sun which show his supremacy. He discovers, sustains and annihilates the universe.[23] He is adored by thirty-three gods, Siddhas, Risis, Brāhmaṇas, Cāraṇas, Gandharvas, Sādhyas, Vasus, Pannagas and Rudras.[24] In all the seven worlds no body can surpass him.[25] Even *sudarśana-cakra* with which Viṣṇu destroyed the demons is made of his[26] lustre. Of his 108 names some are expressive of his supremacy and identification with the highest metaphysical principle of the universe. These names are Aja, Kāla, Ādideva, Carācarātmā, Sukṣātmā and Viśvakarma. In this very context the grace of the god and surrender to him are mentioned which show that the Sun-god was a sectarian god and the stream of *bhakti* was flooding the naturalistic concept of the Sun-god of the Vedic tradition. It is said that at the beginning of creation the Sun-god out of compassion for the starving humanity gave rain and food.[27] Dhaumya advised

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[9] *G.E.I.,* p. 115. He thinks that the Epic in reality recognizes only the first and the last two viz., the Sauras, the Śaivas and the Vaiṣṇavas.

[10] *MBH.,* III.138.18 refers to a secret Veeda of the Sun.

[11] *Ram.,* VI.105.

[12] Majumdar, R.C. (Ed.), *A.I.U.,* p. 360.

[13] Raychoudhuri, H.C., The *Mahābhārata,* Some Aspects of its culture, *Cul.H.I.,* vol. II, p. 77.

[14] *MBH.,* VII.82.16—*Sahasrānucarān Saurānsahasraṁ cāṣṭa cāparān.* cf. *MBH.* (Cr.), VII.58.15—*Sahasrānucarān Saurānaṣṭadaśaṣṭāni ca.*

[15] De, S.K., *A.S.L.,* p. 64 translated it as mentioned above but J. N. Farquhar, *O.R.L.I.* understood it to mean, 'One thousand Brāhmaṇa Sun-worshippers who have eight thousand followers'.

[16] *MBH.,* III.3.16–28; cf. *MBH.* (Cr.), III.3.17–28.

[17] Ibid., III.3.78.

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[18] *MBH.*, III.3.36–*Tvamātmā sarvadehināṁ/ tvaṁ yoniḥ sarvabhūtānāṁ...*

[19] Ibid., III.3.37–*tvaṁ gatiḥ sarvasāṁkhyānāṁ yogināṁ tvaṁ parāyaṇaṁ.*

[20] Ibid., 55.

[21] Ibid., 56–*Iśvarāṇāṁ tvamiśvaraḥ...*

[22] Ibid., 60–*Tvamindramāhustvaṁ Rudrastvaṁ Viṣṇustvaṁ Prajāpatiḥ/ tvamagnistvaṁ manaḥ sukṣmaṁ prabhustvaṁ Brahmaśāśvataṁ.*

[23] Ibid., 38, 57.

[24] Ibid., 40–44.

[25] Ibid., 45–*Sabrahmakeṣu lokeṣu saptasvapyakhileṣuca/ na tadbhūtamahaṁ manye yadkārdatiricyate.*

[26] Ibid., 48.

[27] Ibid., 5–*tato anukaṁpayā teṣāṁ Savitā svapitā yathā.*

Yudhiṣṭhira to take shelter into him who is the father of all creatures.[28] There are direct references to the attitude of *bhakti* to the Sun-god.[29] In the legend of Karṇa the *bhaktas* of the Sun-god are mentioned.[30] Karṇa is described as an ardent worshipper of the Sun.[31] There is an exclusiveness in his devotion to the Sun-god.[32] Similarly in the legend of Samvaraṇa[33] Vasiṣṭha invokes the Sun-god in a sectarian fashion. He is the cause of creation, sustenance and dissolution. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva are his three aspects. The three Vedas are his forms.

In the *Rāmāyaṇa* the *Āditya-hridaya* hymn[34] extols the Sun-god to supreme height and identifies him with all the great gods in the typical sectarian fashion. He is the lord of even Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa.[25] He is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of all creatures.[36] This aspect is expressed by his few names as Sarvabhavodbhava, Viśvabhāvana, Devadevaṁ, Jagatpatiṁ, Hiraṇyaretā, Hiraṇyagarbha, Rikyajusāmapāragaḥ etc. found in the *Āditya-hridaya* hymn.

The development of a sectarian literature is an essential characteristic of a sect. This tendency finds its full growth in the Purāṇas[37] but its beginnings may be traced in the Epics. It is specifically said in the *Mahābhārata* that there was 'a secret Veda of the Sun' taught to Arvāvasu.[38] It clearly shows that the Sun-worshippers out of competition with the Vaiṣṇavas and the Śaivas had developed a Veda of their own which was different from the traditional Vedas.

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[28] *MBH.*, 9—*pitaiṣa sarvabhūtānāṁ tasmāt taṁ śarṇaṁ vraja.*

[29] Ibid., 64—*bhaktayā pujāṁ karoti yaḥ*; 66, —*tadbhāvabhaktāḥ.*

[30] Ibid., III.301.8—*bhakto ayaṁ parayā bhaktayā māmiteva mahābhuja.*

[31] It is quite probable that Karṇa himself represents the Sun. Hopkins, *E.M.*, p. 87.

[32] Ibid., III.302.4—*Iṣṭo bhaktaśca me karṇo na cānyad daivataṁ divi.*

[33] *MBH.*, I.173.18.

[34] *Ram.*, VI.105. It has been taken by many as a late litany not found in the Bengal text.

[35] *Ram.*, VI.105.19—*Brahmeśānacyuteśāya Sūrāyādityavarcase.*

[36] Ibid., 22—*nāśayateṣa vai bhūtaṁ tameva srijatiprabhuḥ.*

[37] Hazra, *Studies in the Upa-Purāṇas*, vol. I., p. 100f.

That the Sun had a sectarian following may be inferred from some of the names of historical personages in the *Mahābhārata*. Such names are Sūryadhvaja, Rocamāna, Aṁsumāna,[39] Sūryadatta.[40] It is significant to note that the armour of Sūryadatta is described as Sun-like and that of his master, King-Virāṭa as containing Sun-symbols.[41] It is well known that in ancient India many persons took the name of their deity out of extreme devotion to him. For example, Varāhamihira—a Sun-worshipper of Magian tradition had Mihira in his name and his father is known as Ādityadāsa.[42]

The Epic data thus reflect the advancement of Sun-worship towards sectarianism from the non-exclusiveness of the Vedic tradition. This was a momentous change in the concept of solarreligion. This transformation of Sun-worship into a sect was in harmony with the prevailing fashion of the day as the religious life of the post-Buddha age was characterized by the growth of sects and sectarian ideologies.

Antiquity of Solar Sect:

The exact date for the origin of the Sun-sect cannot be fixed with absolute certainty in view of controversial opinions regarding the time of different strata of Epic texts.[43] Hopkins[44] thinks that of the five sects of the Sauras, the Gaṇeśas, the Śāktas, the Śaivas and the Vaiṣṇavas only the first and the last two are recognized in the *Mahābhārata* while the rest two—the Gaṇeśas and the Śāktas are later additions to the text. It shows that the sect of the Sun-worshippers was as old as those of the Vaiṣṇavas and the Śaivas. It is to be noted that there is no reference to Mihira—the Irānian Sun-god in the *Āditya-hridaya* hymn of the *Rāmāyaṇa* while in the *Mahābhārata* Mihira figures as one of the names of the Sun-god as distinguished from Mitra[45] in connection with the legend of Yudhiṣṭhira. The *Chullaniddesa*[46] (2nd Cent. B.C.) refers to the worshippers of Sūrya along with other sectarian gods. It appears that the Buddhist text intends to refer to a sect as it defines *devatā* by the aphorism *Ye Yeṣāṁ dakhineyya te teṣāṁ devatā*. The *Niddesa*[47] and the *Milaṅdapanh*[48] refer to the sect of the Sun. Pāṇini[49] refers to the worship of Sūrya. He further refers to the rule *sāsyadevatā* and thereby indirectly indicates about the existence of a Sun-sect.[50] Patañjali[51] mentions the worship of Sūrya and Āditya and also the images of gods in general.[52] The Bhārhut medallion (3rd Cent. B.C.) containing a human bust of the Sun,[53] the terracottas of the Sun from

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[38] *MBH.*, III.138.18—*rahasyavedaṁ kritavān Sūryasya dvijasuttamaḥ*. S. K. De, *A.S.L.*, p. 64 takes it as a vulgate insertion into the text.

[39] *MBH.*, I.85.10.

[40] Ibid., IV.31.15.

[41] Ibid., IV.31.13—15.

[42] *Brihatjātaka*, Tr. B. Suryanarain Rao, XVIII.3—*Ādityadāsa tanyastadavāptabodhaḥ*.

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[43] Pusalker, A.D., The *Mahābhārata*, Its History and Character, *Cul.H.I.*, vol. II, pp. 55–67; Hopkins, *G.E.I.*, pp. 363ff.

[44] *G.E.I.*, p. 115.

[45] *MBH.*, III.3.61—*Vivasvān Mihiraḥ pūṣā mitraḥ......*"

[46] pp. 173-74; See, Law, B.C., *India as Described in early texts of Buddhism and Jainism.*, p. 191, cf. Jain, J.C. *Life in Ancient India as depicted in Jain canons*, p. 215.

[47] I.89.

[48] IV.8.12., *S.B.E.*, XXXVI. p. 127 f.n. 1.

[49] *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, III.1.114.

[50] Agrawala, V.S., *India as known to Pāṇini*, p. 358.

[51] *Mahābhāṣya*—II.2.11, II.2.29.

[52] Puri, B.N., *India in the Time of Patañjali*, p. 181.

[53] *A.I.U.*, p. 465.

Patna[54] and Chandraketugarh[55] of the Maurya and the Śuṅga periods respectively, the Bhājā (2nd Cent. B.C.—1st Cent. B.C.) and hte Bodh Gayā (1 Cent. B.C.) reliefs of the Sun-god[56] and representation of a solar standard on a local coin of Avanti[57] (2nd-1st Cent. A.D.) definitely show that the Sun-sect was in existence by the 3rd-2nd centuries B.C. which is the probable period for the evolution of the Vaiṣṇava and the Śaiva sects also.[58] By this time the *Mahābhārata* must have incorporated sectarian materials. Hopkins[59] thinks that all the hymns to the Sun are late but it is difficult to agree with him as sectarian trends in connection with the Sun-god are not confined to the description of the Sauras and the secret Veda of the Sun but are traceable throughout the *Mahābhārata*. In many older references also he is the object of worship in an exclusive manner. There is a reference[60] in the *Rāmāyaṇa* to the ascetic Sun-worshippers who adore the Sun-god with arms upstretched beside the river Mandākinī. Similarly Saṃvaraṇa also worshipped the Sun-god as *ūrdhvamukhaḥ*.[61] These references show that there had been a class of Sun-worshippers in the Epics. Moreover, the iconographic evidences[62] clearly show that the Sun-sect was already evolved by the 3rd-2nd centuries B.C. However, the probability is not ruled out that it may have taken a sectarian form as early as the 5th-4th centuries B.C.[63] which is the upper limit of the Epics[64] and which may be the time of Pāṇini[65] also. This date coincides with the time for the advent of the Fire-Sun-worshipping Magas[66] in India which must have accelerated the growth of Sun-worship towards sectarianism. This fact makes the probability of the 5th-4th Cent. B.C. as the time for the origin of Sun-sect to assume greater reliability.

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[54] *J.I.S.O.A.*, vol. III. No. 2, p. 125.

[55] Das Gupta, P.C., Terracotta from Chandraketugarh, *Lalitakalā*, No. 6, October, 1959, p. 46ff.

[56] Coomarswamy, *HIIA*, p. 33; 67.

[57] Srivastava, V.C., The Religious Study of a Symbol on an Avanti Coin. *Proc. of Seminar on Local Coins, Memoir, No.* 2, Varanasi, 1966, pp. 133—136.

[58] See Bhandarkar, *V.S.M.R.S.*

[59] *E.M.*, p. 88.

[60] *Ram.*, II.95.7—*Ādityamupatiṣṭhante niyamādūrdhvabāhavaḥ.*

[61] *MBH.*, I.172.12.

[62] Banerjea, J.N., *D.H.I.*, p. 203f.

[63] Sankalia, H.D., *Archaeology of Gujarat*, p. 212.

Nature of The Sun-sect:

It appears that the Sun-sect was ideologically connected with the Vedic tradition. The Sauras in the camp of the Pāṇḍus are said to be experts in the Vedic studies.[67] Many names such as Sūrya, Arymā, Bhaga, Tvaṣṭā, Pūṣā, Savitā, Vivasvān, etc. in the list of 108 names of the Sun-god[68] showing sectarianism, are Vedic survivals in the Epic pantheon. Vedakartā, Vedāṅga, Vedavāhana[69] are names in the list of the Sun-god which show his connection with the Vedic tradition. It is said in connection with the worship of the Sun by Yudhiṣṭhira that experts in the Vedas worship him by hymns mentioned in their own schools of the Vedas.[70] Sūrya takes the form of a Brāhmaṇa who is expert in the Vedic lore.[71] It is said that Kuntī invoked the Sun-god by a hymn of the Atharvavedic Upaniṣad.[72] It is specifically said that the Aśvinīkumāras are invoked by means of the hymns of the *Rigveda*.[73] The Epic methodology of Sun-worship also contains Vedic survivals such as the *japa* the *ācamana,* the *prāṇāyāma,* the *upasthāna,* the *arghya,* etc. as discussed in the succeeding pages. In the Upaniṣads it is said that Sun-worship was done with arms upstretched and face towards the Sun.[74] In the *Rāmāyaṇa*[75] there is a class of Sun-worshippers which is referred to as worshipping the Sun-god as *ūrdhvabāhus.* Similarly Samvaraṇa[76]—a worshipper of the Sun is known as *ūrdhvamukhaḥ.* These methods are continuations of the Vedic tradition. In typical Vedic tradition the Sun-god has been described as the soul of the universe.[77] His descriptions as Time, the raingiver, the lord of cows, the demon-dispellor, the father of Yama[78] are continuations of the Vedic line of thought.

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[64] Winternitz, *H.I.L.*, vol. I, p. 465; Hopkins, *G.E.I.*, p. 397; Jacobi, H.N., *G.G.W.*, 1896, p. 13 n. 2 assigns the contents of the *Mahābhārata* to a pre-Achaemenid period and suggests that it present form cannot be later than the 2nd or 3rd century B.C. The *Rāmāyaṇa* may have been composed originally in the 3rd-4th Cent. B.C. and it assumed its present form at the end of the 2nd Cent. A.D. Winternitz, *H.I.L.*, pp. 500–517; see, Pusalker, A.D., *S.E.P.*, pp. 1–42.

[65] The date of Pāṇini is controversial. Bhandarkar, R.G., *J.B.B.R.A.S.*, vol. XVI, p. 340 regards fifth century B.C. as a reasonable hypothesis for Pāṇini's date. Kane, P.V., *H.D.S.*, vol. II, pt. I, p. XI assigns him between 600 B.C.–300 B.C.; Belvalkar, S.K., *Systems of Sanskrit Grammar*, p. 15 gives a still earlier date of 700–500 B.C. to him.

[66] Srivastava, V.C., Antiquity of Magas in Ancient India, *Proc. I.H.C.* 1968 (1969), pp. 86–94; Srivastava, V.C., Advent of the Magas or Irānian Priests in India, *Proc. Seminar on Foreigners in Ancient India*, Calcutta University, 1970, pp. 73–79. The issue has been discussed in detail in the chapter V.

[67] *MBH.*, VI.82.16., *dāntān vedavratasnātān snātānavabhritheṣu ca.*

[68] Ibid., III.3.16–28.

[69] Ibid., III.3.19.

From the above descriptions the inference should not be drawn that the Sun-sect was solely a contribution of the Vedic thought. On the other hand the Sun-sect appears to have been enriched by the indigenous traditions of *bhakti.* Many non-Āryan tribes are said to be the worshippers of the Sun. Such non-Āryan tribes are the Siddhas, the Cāraṇas, the Gandharvas, the Yakṣas, the Guhyakas and the Nāgas,[79] the Asuras and the Rākṣasas.[80] *Bhakti* is directly referred to many times in connection with the worship of the Sun-god.[81] He is worshipped by means of *dhūpa, dīpa*, and *naivedya*. He is worshipped in human form. In short it can be said that all the constituents of the Purāṇic *pūjā* had their beginnings in the Epics. It shows that the tradition of Sun-worship in the Epics underwent a radical change in the sense that it incorporated the indigenous traditions of *bhakti* and *pūjā* along with the Vedic tradition.

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[70] *MBH.,* III.3.39.

[71] Ibid., III.300.9—*Brāhmaṇo Vedavid bhūtvā Sūryo yogardhirūpavān.*

[72] Ibid., III.305.20.

[73] Ibid., I.3.56-57.

[74] *Maitrī, U.,* I.2.

[75] *Ram.,* II.95.7.

[76] *MBH.,* I.172.12.

[77] Ibid., III.3.27—*Carācarātmā;* cf. *R.V.,* I.115.1.

[78] Hopkins, *E.M,* p. 89.

It appears that the Irānian tradition of Sun-worship had also its impact on the Epic Sun-sect. It is significant to note that in the list of 108 names of the Sun-god there is no mention of the Irānian Mithra. Here the Indian form of this god—Mitra is mentioned. But in the same legend later on Mihira is mentioned as one of the names of the Sun-god and that too has been distinguished from Mitra in the same line.[82] It shows that the Irānian god Mihira came to find a place in the Epic Sun-sect. Moreover, the Irānian tradition of providing the Sun-images with boots appears to have been referred to in the legend of Jamadagni.[83] The four castes of Śākadīpa are also mentioned and one of these is the Magas—the Irānian Fire-Sun-worshipping priests.[84]

It is quite probable that the advent of the Magas and their tradition of Sun-worship might have accelerated the growth of Sun-worship but as the matter stands there is no appreciable impact of Mithraic tradition on the ideology of the Sun-cult in the *Mahābhārata*.[85] In the *Āditya-hridaya* hymn of the *Rāmāyaṇa* there is no reference to Mihira. It shows that the sectarian tradition was an outgrowth of the indigenous tradition while the philosophical background of the sect was provided by the Vedic thought. The Sun-sect of the Epics does not appear to have been a popular creed as it goes unnoticed by the Greek writers and there is no specific mention of this sect in the works of Pāṇini and Patañjali. The factors responsible for its unpopularity as compared to Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism seem to be two fold. Firstly, there was already a popular sect round Viṣṇu—a form of the Sun.[86] Secondly, the daily visibility of the Sun to naked eye prevented the sectarians to develop any mystery or high philosophy centering round him which are essentials for the efficacy of a creed. The main reasons for the emergence of this sect appears to have been the impact of the indigenous tradition of *bhakti*, and the influence of the Irānian tradition of Sun-worship. The patronage by the foreign kings[87] like Darius, Mihirakula, Kaniṣka, etc. may have also contributed to this trend.

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[79] *MBH.*, III.3.40.

[80] Ibid., III.3.29.

[81] Ibid., III.3.64—*Bhaktayā pūjāṁ karoti yaḥ.*

[82] Ibid., III.3.61—*Vivasvān Mihiraḥ Pūṣā Mitro dharmastathaiva ca.*

[83] Ibid., XIII.96.13.

[84] Ibid., VI.11.36,

The Sun and Humanisation of His Personality:

The Sun-god witnessed another revolutionary change in his personality in the Epics. He frees himself from the arrested anthropomorphism of the Vedas. There is a development in his personality towards a free and full humanisation.[88] In spite of his descriptions as a disc, a bird or a horse or a bull he is ever a god with a human personality.[89] In the *Mahābhārata* the Sun is described as appearing in human form in connection with the legends of Arvāvasu,

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[85] Though cult-objects with Irānian impact are found from the 3rd-2nd centuries B.C. onwards the impact of this tradition on the orthodox literature is visible only from the 5th-6th centuries A.D. onwards. Hence the question of the impact of Irānian tradition on Sun-cult has been discussed in the chapter—V dealing with the Purāṇic Sun-worship.

[86] See, Bhandarkar, *VSMRS*, Hopkins *RI.*, pp. 377-78.

[87] Jairazbhoy, R.A., *Foreign Influence in Ancient India*, p. 151.

[88] Raychaudhuri, op. cit., p. 77.

[89] Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 85.

Karṇa, Kuntī, Yudhiṣṭhira and Jamadagni. In the Arvāvasu's legend the Sun appeared in human form.[90] It is said in the legend of Karṇa that the Sun took the form of a Brāhmaṇa.[91] In connection with the legend of Kuntī it is specifically said that the Sun assumed two forms by his power of Yoga—by one he remained in the sky as the natural form while his second form is that of a human being by which he came to Kuntī.[92] The Sun appeared in the form of a Brāhmaṇa to Jamadagni.[93] To Yudhiṣṭhira also he showed himself in human form.[94] The Sun was present in human form when Agastya instructed Rāma to recite *Āditya-hridaya* hymn.[95] He drinks, goes home, possesses hands, hair etc., bestows wisdom, makes speeches, acts as a witness, etc.[96]

The Sun's Family and Attendants:

With the humanisation of the Sun's personality there emerged a fully developed family round him. Tvaṣṭrī, the daughter of Tvaṣṭri is mentioned as the wife of Vivasvat.[97] She is also known as Saṁjñā and Saraṇyū.[98] These names are Vedic survivals[99] in the Epics. More important than these names is that of Suvarcalā who is described as the devoted wife of Sūrya in the Epics.[100] It is quite probable that she is identical with Sūrya-varcasā of the Buddhist literature.[101] In the opinion of Hopkins[102] she represents a sun-flower myth as Suvarcalā is a solar plant also. It may be noted that the connection of the Sun with nature has receded in the background in the Epics. It is probably due to this reason that Uṣā whose natural basis is apparent could not find a place in the Epics.[103] In view of this it is suggested that Suvarcalā is a real wife of Sūrya and not a representative of some plant of that name. The *Harivaṁsa*[104] refers to Chāyā—the shadow of Saraṇyū as the wife of Sūrya but she does not figure in the Epic proper.

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[90] *MBH.*, III.138.18-19—*Mūrtimāstaṁ dadasārtha svayamagrabhugavyayaḥ.*

[91] Ibid., III.300.9.

[92] Ibid., III.306.9,10.

[93] Ibid., XIII.96.20.

[94] Ibid., III.3.70.

[95] *Ram.*, VI.105.31.

[96] Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 85.

[97] *MBH.*, I.66.35.

[98] *Harivaṁsa*, 545.

[99] *R.V.*, X.17.1,2.

[100] *MBH.*, XIII.146.5; *Ram.*, II.30.30; V.24.9.

[101] *Dīghanikāya, Mahāsamaya Sūttanta*, p. 288.

[102] *Epic Mythology*, p. 85.

Many sons and daughters of the Sun-god are mentioned in the Epics and the *Harivaṁsa*. Aśvins are his sons by Tvaṣṭri.[105] Śanaiscara is his son by Chāyā. The southern seer-Cakradhanus also known as Kapila is born of Sūrya.[106] Sugrīva is begotten of Sūrya[107] and at death he enters the disc of the Sun.[108] Other sons of Sūrya who return to him at death are the apes—Śveta and Jyotirmukha.[109] Karṇa and Yama are also his sons.[110]

Suprajā, wife of Bhānu,[111] Sraddhā Vaivasvatī[112] and Sāvitri[113] are his daughters. It is significant to point out that a few of these such as Śanaiścara, Kapila, Bhānu are included in the list of the names of the Sun-god himself. Aśvins are the Sun-gods. It is probable that a few members of his family also came to be invoked along with him.

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[103] In the southern version of *MBH,* I.203.34 Uṣa—another Vedic name of Sūrya's wife is mentioned.

[104] *Harivaṁsa,* 545.

[105] *MBH.,* I.III.58, *H.V.,* 601.

[106] *MBH.,* V.109.17.

[107] *Ram.,* IV.14.22.

[108] Ibid., VII.110.22.

[109] Ibid., VI.30.33.

[110] *MBH.,* XII.196.6; *E.M.,* p. 87.

[111] *MBH.,* III.221.9.

[112] Ibid., XII.265.8.

[113] Ibid., III.110.26.

There is a specific mention of the worship of the Aśvinī-kumāras-Dasra and Nāsatyas who are his sons.[114]

Aruṇa is described as the charioteer of Sūrya.[115] He is like the red wheel, is the foregoer of the Sun at whose sight all begin to pray.[116] Aruṇa, Māṭhara and Daṅḍa are mentioned as his attendants. They are worshipped along with the Sun.[117]

Names of the Sun-god:

In the Epics there are references to many old solar deities such as Sūrya, Savitri, Mitra, Pūṣan, Aśvins, Vivasvat, Viṣṇu, Bhaga and Tvaṣṭā[118] who may be regarded as Vedic survivals in the Epic pantheon but these gods have lost their pristine splendour[119] and there is a marked tendency to regard these once-separate gods as merely different names and forms of the Sun. At many occasions it is said that in reality there is only one Sun.[120] Ādityas—sons of Aditi—are found mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*. They are eleven or twelve or thirteen in number according to various lists but the wise say, there are twelve of them.[121] The twelve Ādityas who are sons of Aditi are named in one list of the *Mahābhārata* as Dhātā, Mitra, Aryamā, Indra, Varuṇa, Aṁsa, Bhaga, Vivasvān, Pūṣā, Savitā, Tvaṣṭā, Viṣṇu. It is said that though Viṣṇu is youngest of the Ādityas, yet he is the greatest due to his qualities.[122] At another place there is a reference to the twelve Ādityas but their names are not mentioned. However, they have been identified with the twelve months of the year.[123] In the list of 108 names of the Sun referred to in connection with the legend of Yudhiṣṭhira the Sun is called as *Dvādastana* and *Aditisuta*.[124] At the time of universal dissolution the twelve Ādityas appear as twelve sons of whom only Viṣṇu is eternal.[125] Thus it is clear that the Epics were familiar with the concept of the twelve Ādityas who are twelve forms of the Sun and are identified with the twelve months of the year. In the later Vedic texts the number of the Ādityas had swelled to twelve and they are regarded as identical with the months of the year.[126] Thus the Epics were following the Brāhmaṇic tradition with the difference that the prominence of Viṣṇu as the chief of the Ādityas is clearly mentioned in the Epics which foreshadows the Purāṇic trend. There are references to the seven Suns[127] which may be due to the Buddhist influence.[128]

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[114] *MBH.*, I.3.56f.

[115] Ibid., I.24.15–17.

[116] Ibid., VII.161.2.

[117] Ibid., III.3.68—*Māṭharāruṇadaṅḍādyāstānstān vandeśanikṣubhān.*

[118] Sorenson, Index, vol. II, pp. 664; *Ram.*, II.25 refers to Pūṣā, Bhaga, Aryamā, etc.

[119] Raychoudhuri, op. cit., p. 77.

[120] *MBH* (Cr.), III.134.7—*Ekaḥ Sūryaḥ Sarvaṁ idaṁ vibhāti;* (Cr.) XII.352.10—*Ekaḥ Sūryaḥ Sarvaṁ idaṁ prabhāsate.*

[121] *MBH.*, III.134.19; *MBH* (Cr.), III.134.18.

[122] Ibid., 1.65.15-16.

Pūṣan's solar nature is apparent when he is referred to as a god who shone in the wars of the gods and demons of old[129] and who goes, having a thousand rays, after warming the earth, to the western mountains at the close of day.[130] Likewise the identity of Savitri with the Sun is brought forth when he is described as taking away glory of the stars on rising.[131] The disc of Savitri sets in the west.[132] It shows the solar nature of Savitri. His epithets *'Sarvalokaprabhāvana'* and *'Vibhāvasu'* are indicative of his solar nature. He rises in the east and sings the Savitri bestowing, as Sūrya, the Yajus formula.[133] Vibhāvasu is a common name of the Sun in the Epics.[134] Savitri has been unequivocally identified with the Sun.[135] The solar nature of Viṣṇu is not forgotten in the Epics but he has got a sect of his own[136] in which other cults such as those of Vāsudeva, Kriṣṇa and Nārāyaṇa are mixed up.[137] Mitra has lost his glory and individuality in the Epics.[138] Indra is strong enough to have his own cult. Though formally identified with Sūrya,[139] Bhaga is the Sun especially as the procreative power and as such his constellation is suitable for wedding.[140] This is the reason why the means of securing a husband's love and obedience is called *'yaśasyaṁ Bhagadaivataṁ'*.[141] All these Sun gods are now merged into one Sun-god under the name of Sūrya or Āditya, though his different aspects are represented by different old names and new synonyms and epithets. This emergence of Sun in Āditya or Śurya as the supreme and original Sun-god is a departure from the past and may be regarded as the Epic innovation.

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[123] *MBH.*, III.134.19.

[124] Ibid., III.3.26.

[125] Ibid., III.3.59—*Kritvā dvādaśadhātmānaṁ dvādaśādityatāṁ gataḥ...*; V.181.8—*Yathā ādityā dvādaśa lokasankṣaye;* XIII. 140.34—*dvādaśādityasadriśo yugāntāgnirivāparaḥ.*

[126] See Ch. III. f.n. 656.

[127] *MBH.*, III.188.87, III.190.78; *MBH* (Cr.), III.188.75.

[128] Hopkins, *E.M.*, p. 84.

[129] *MBH.*, VII.105.21.

[130] Ibid., V.179.39—*athāvatāpya prithivīṁ pūṣā divasasankṣaye/ jagāmāstaṁ sahasrānśustato yudhamupārmat//* cf. *MBH* (Cr.), V.180.30.

[131] Ibid., IX.32.18.

[132] Ibid., VII.38.18,

Traits of the Sun-gods:

The character of the Sun-god is well-reflected in his names and epithets found in the Epics. The primary function of the Sun-god is to drive away darkness and demons.[142] At sunset he absorbs into himself all the glory of the earth, even the light of flashing swords and then all evil demons appear.[143] He is the lord of lights.[144] He illumines the whole earth.[145] The light-giving aspect of the Sun-god is expressed by his such names and epithets as *Divākara, Dinakrita, Prābhākara, Tamonuda, Bhāskara, Tamoghna, Timironmathana, Tamobhedi.*[146] It is said that there would be complete darkness if he does not rise.[147] Sūrya as possessed of radiant rays is referred to by his such names as *Aṁsumat, Arka, Dīptāṁśu, Gavāmpatiḥ, Mārīcimān, Ghāmakeśī, Sahasra raśmi, Raśmimantaṁ, Vibhāvasu* etc.[148] *Svarabhānuśatru, Svarbhānusūdan* and *Arihan* are indicative of his role as the destroyer of demons.[149]

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[133] *MBH.*, V.75.12, XII.58.22 (Cr.), V.73.12, VII.58.28.

[134] Ibid., XII.319.2f.

[135] Hopkins, *E.M.*, p. 83.

[136] Ibid., pp. 202–204.

[137] Bhandarkar, *VSMRS*, pp. 30–38.

[138] Hopkins, *E.M.*, p. 89.

[139] *MBH.*, III.3.16.

[140] Ibid., I.8.16—*Vivāhaṁ sthāpayitvāgre nakṣatre Bhagadaivate; Ram.*, I.72.13.

[141] *MBH.*, III.233.8.

[142] Ibid., III.185.30.

More prominent than his day-maker aspect is his role as the rain-giver and the corn-producer. It is said that he draws up waters for eight months during his northern course and in the remaining four months during his southern course he pours them down in the form of rain.[150] From the combination of heat and water the plants and corns are produced. Thus the Sun is ultimately responsible for the production of food on which men subsist.[151] That is why the food has been described as a form of Sūrya.[152] Yudhiṣṭhira prayed him specifically for food which he gave to him for twelve years.[153] In the Vedic tradition the rain-giving aspect of Sūrya is not fully developed though it is known.[154] In the Epics this aspect is quite frequently emphasised which was taken up by the Purāṇas.[155] It is in keeping with the ideal of *bhakti* of the times. Only a rain-giver and producer of food can be the creator and sustainer of the universe. In the Epics the Sun-god has been assigned these functions which may more appropriately be assigned to rain-gods like Indra and Parjanya.[156]

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[143] *MBH.,* V.108.3; VI.48.114; VII.50.3; VI.86.42; (Cr. Ed) VII.48.41,42, VI.82.41.

[144] Ibid., III.3.47—*tvaṁ sarvajyotiṣāmpatiḥ; Ram.,* VI.105.20.

[145] *Ibid.,* III.3.52—*bhāsayase mahīṅ,* I.173.18; III.3.38;—*tvayā lokaḥ prakāśayate.*

[146] All these names occur in *MBH.,* III.3 and *Ram.,* VI.105 and elsewhere also. See Sorenson's *Index,* Vol. II, p. 664.

[147] *MBH.,* III.3.53.

[148] Ibid., III.3.16,18,21,61,62,63 I.173.18; *Ram.,* VI.105.6,11.

[149] *MBH.,* III.302. 18–20.

[150] Ibid., XII.264.11—*Ādityaijāyate vriṣṭiḥ; Ram.,* VI.105.13 calls him *ghanavriṣṭi; cf. Manu S.,* III.76; *Vasiṣṭha D. Śāstra,* XI.13.

[151] *MBH.,* III.3.6–8.

[152] Ibid., III.3.9—*Evaṁ bhānumayaṁ hyannaṁ bhūtānāṁ prāṇadhārṇaṁ;* III.3.49-50.

[153] Ibid., III.3.67,71.

Equally important and prominent to his rain-giving aspect is his identification with Time. It is clear from his such names as *Kāla, Saṁvatsarakara, Kālacakrapravartaka, Kālādhyakṣa,* and *Kṣaṇa.*[157] The twelve Ādityas who are regular Sun-gods in the Epics are identified with the twelve months of the year.[158] His lordship of the planets[159] is also indicative of his role as the maker of Time. He has been identified with all the planets.[160] The worship of the Sun as Time is Vedic in origin but its development under the impact of astronomical advancement is a theme of the Epics and the Purāṇas. Thus the tradition of worshipping Sūrya in association with Navagrahas[161] was initiated in the Epics.

The Sun's energy and power of generation is indicated by his such names as *Teja, Tejasāmpati.*[162] His power of stimulation is referred to by his names as *Savitri, Kartā,*[163] etc. *Ananta, Sarvasyādi, Sanātana*—all these epithets express his ancient and eternal nature.[164] He is many-sided as is evident by his title *Sarvatomukha.*[165] He is the ruler of the dead. In this capacity he is known as Yama.[166] He has been regarded as the gate to liberation and heaven as is evident from his names–*Svargadvāraṁprajādvāraṁ,* and *Mokṣadvāraṁ.*[167] His other names as *Bhūtādi, Bhūtācārya, Budha, Brihaspati, Viśvakarman, Vāyu, Varuṇa, Vedakartri, Vedāṅga, Vedavāhana, Viśvātman, Vivasvat, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Puruṣa, Prithivī, Pitā, Mātā, Soma,*[168] etc. are expressions of the desire of sectarian Sun-worshippers to raise their deity to supreme godhood by identifying him with all the principal gods. These terms also reveal the unity between the Sun and the universe.

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[154] *V.M.,* p. 30.

[155] Roy, S.N., *Paurāṇic Dharma Evaṁ Samāja,* p. 54.

[156] Hopkins, *E.M.,* p. 127.

[157] *MBH.,* III.3.16, 20-23.

[158] Ibid., III.134.19.

[159] *Ram.,* VI.105.15; *MBH.,* III.200.85.

[160] *MBH.,* III.3. includes names of planets also in the list of 108 names of the Sun-god.

[161] Banerjea, J.N., *D.H.I.,* p. 443.

[162] *MBH.,* III.3.17.

[163] *MBH.,* III.3.29; *Ram.,* VI.105.7.

[164] Ibid., III.3.21, 24.

In the Epics the benevolent qualities of the Sun-god are expressed by such epithets as *Maitreya, Karunānvita, Dhanvantari, Jīvana, Kāmada* and *Prāṇadhāraka.*[169] He creates and sustains the universe. He provides mankind with the food. He drives away demons and other evil powers. In spite of the fact that the Sun-god is a life-giving god full of mercy for the devotees,[170] his malevolent side has not been forgotten in the Epics. On the other hand the role of the Sun as a malevolent deity is emphasised in both the Epics. He is the destroyer of the universe.[171] His names like *Mrityu*[172] *Sarvatāpana*[173] are indicative of this aspect. The fire known as *Saṁvartaka* which is responsible for the dissolution of the universe is actually produced by the Sun.[174] In the legend of Jamadagni the destructive role of the Sun-god has been displayed. The Sun is an evil planet.[175] It is probably due to this increased emphasis on his malevolent aspect that Sūrya is an evil spirit, Arka is a *dānava*, Bhaga is a Rudra and Vivasvat and Mitra are evil demons in the *Mahābhārata*. The trend represents the religious conditions of the time when evil and good spirits were not differentiated specially among the popular masses.[176] Probably the oppressive heat of northern India, where the Epics were composed, had also contributed towards this feature.

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[165] *MBH.,* III.3.24.

[166] Ibid., III.3.18.

[167] Ibid., III.3.26.

[168] Ibid., III.3.16–28.

[169] Ibid., III.3.22,24,25,27.

[170] Ibid., I.172.18 calls him as *Mahākāruṇika.*

[171] *Ram.,* VI.105.19–*Bhāsvate sarvabhakṣāya Raudrāya vapuṣe namaḥ;* cf. *MBH.,* III.3.58.

[172] *Ram.,* VI.105.14; *MBH.,* III.3.16.

[173] *Ram.,* VI.105.14.

[174] *MBH.,* III.3.57.

The Sun-god is a great moral and ethical force[177] in the Epics. The Sun-god is the beholder of good and bad deeds of men.[178] Light is goodness and Sūrya is superlative goodness as all sinners are darkness.[179] Sūrya should not be offended. One must not urinate against the Sun nor look at him rising.[180] There is a philosophical and metaphysical side of the Sun's personality when it is said that there is a Sun of the Sun, an over Sun without parts.[181] The identity of the worshipper and the worshipped is repeated when it is said that the saint approaches to enter his disc at which Vivasvat welcomes him. The glory of the saint and the glory of the Sun becomes once.[182] His subtle body is expressed by the epithets *Sūkṣātmā, Carācarātmā,* etc.[183]

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[175] *MBH.,* III.200.8. In the Smritis also Ādityas are mentioned in the list of terrible deities, *Viṣṇu S.,* LXXXVI.9.

[176] Hopkins, *E.M.,* p. 84.

[177] The legend of Kuntī in the *Mahābhārata* III.306 shows that the Sun-god did not feel a moral pinch in having physical union with a virgin. On the other hand he insisted for it. This obvious immorality is in keeping with the low tone of morality of the *Mahābhārata;* Hopkins, *R.I.,* pp. 352-53.

[178] *Ram.,* III.63.16—*Āditya bho lokakritākritagñya lokasya satyānritakarmasākṣin.*

[179] *MBH.,* (Cr. Ed), VII.121.49.

[180] *MBH.,* XIII.125.64; *Ram.,* II.75.21; cf. *Manu S.,* IV.37; *Yāj. S.,* I.135.

[181] *MBH.,* XII.318.41-42 *Atisūryastu niṣkalaḥ.*

[182] Ibid., XII.362.15,16.

[183] Ibid., III.3.16—28.

In the Epics there are many additional details and stories about the Sun-god. They foreshadow the Purāṇic trend of the Sun-cult. It is said that his southern limit was fixed by Manu Sāvarṇi and the son of Yavakrīti.[184] In another story it is said that when mount Vindhyā was angry with him, Sūrya said, 'Not by my own will do I revere Manu. My path is laid out for me by those who made the universe.'[185] Dhvajavatī—the daughter of the saint-Harimedhas was stopped from further flight through the western sky by the command of Sūrya.[186] The *Māhābhārata*[187] mentions that Sūrya burned the wife of Jamadagni. Generally these legends are Epic innovations.

Method of Sun-worship:

The Epic methodology of Sun-worship is in many ways a survival of the Vedic tradition but it contains such elements also which are foreign to that tradition. The recitation of hymns sacred to the Sun-god formed an essential feature of Vedic as well as of Epic worship. At several occasions it is said in the Epics that the Sun is to be worshipped by means of *japa* of hymns sacred to him. Thus Yudhiṣṭhira worshipped the Sun by repeating hymns containing 108 names of the Sun-god as well as by hymns of praise and prayer.[188] Karṇa[189] also resorted to the method of *japa* of hymns sacred to the Sun-god. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* Rāma invokes the Sun-god by the *japa* of the *Ādityahridaya* hymn.[190] Besides the *japa* others constituents of the ritual are the

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[184] *MBH.*, (Cr.), V.107.11.

[185] Ibid (Cr.), III.102.4.

[186] Ibid (Cr.), V.108.13.

[187] Ibid., XIII.95.

[188] *MBH.*, III.3.35—*Suciḥ prayatvāg bhūtvā stotramārabdhavaṅstataḥ*, 70—*Evaṁ stuto mahārāja Bhāskaro lokabhāvanaḥ.*

[189] *Ibid.*, III.302.17—*Vidhinā rājaśā rdūla muhurtamajapat tataḥ.*

[190] *Ram.*, VI.105.29—*Ādityaṁ prekṣya japatvedaṁ paraṁ harṣamavāptavān.*

ācamana, the *prāṇāyāma,* the *upasthāna* etc.[191] The concentration and purity of mind and observance of vows involving complete fasting also constituted the ritual of Sun-worship as Yudhiṣṭhira is said to be living on air only while worshipping the Sun-god with devoted mind.[192] There is a reference in the *Rāmāyaṇa* to the *munis* who observe difficult vows such as worshipping the Sun-god by means of the *upasthāna* with their arms upstretched.[193] Similraly in the *Mahābhārata* also Samvaraṇa worshipped the Sun-god by asceticism with face towards the Sun.[194] It shows that asceticism and yogic practices played important part in the Epic Sun-worship. This emphasis on ascetic and yogic practices in general is a marked feature of the Epic society.[195] The magical formula also played important part in Sun-worship as is evident from the fact that Kuntī invoked the Sun by the power of a magic formula.[196] The posture at the time of the worship used to be standing one with face towards the Sun.[197] The salutation[198] to the Sun-god is a frequent theme in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa.* But the *japa* of the Epic tradition is slightly different from that of the Vedic ritual in the sense that in the *japa* of the Epics exclusive emphasis was laid upon the names of the God while in the Vedic school the repetition was of full hymn containing praise and prayer. For example, Yudhiṣṭhira resorts to the *japa* and the *kīrtana* of a hymn which contains 108 names only. Similarly Rāma resorts to the *japa* of a hymn known as the *Āditya-hridaya* which contains names of the Sun-god in its major portion.

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[191] *MBH.,* III.3.35,39; *Ram.,* VI.105.29. In the Smriti literature also these features are mentioned in detail, See Kane, P.V., *HDS.,* vol. II, pt. I, pp. 315–21.

[192] *MBH.,* III.3.34–*Yogamāsthāya dharmātmā vāyubhakṣo jitendriyaḥ.*

[193] *Ram.,* II.95.7–*Ādityamupatiṣṭhante niyamādūrdhvabāhavaḥ.*

[194] *MBH.,* I.172.12,13.

[195] Hopkins, *R.I.,* p. 366.

[196] *MBH.,* III. 306.7,8.

[197] Ibid., III.3.34, I.172.12.

[198] Ibid., III.3.68; *Ram.,* VI.105.16–20.

This departure is in conformity with the *bhakti* ideal of worship during the period. More significant departures may be seen in the employment of flowers, incense, garlands, lamps etc. in the worship of the Sun in the Epics.[199] The Vidyādharas worship the Sun by means of garlands of *mandāra* flowers.[200] There is no specific mention of any image of the Sun-god in the Epics[201] but as discussed earlier the Sun-god was completely anthropomorphised and he used to appear in human form before the worshipper who used to invoke him with face towards the natural Sun and following other rules of worship. It has been shown that actual images of the Sun dating as early as 2nd century B.C.[202] are found and terracottas containing figures of the Sun of still earlier period i.e. Mauryan-Śuṅga period are found.[203] Therefore it can be said that the tradition of the worship by means of images of the Sun-god was known in the Epic[204] society but it was not a popular creed as it is not directly mentioned. The worship of the Sun was done at two *saṁdhyās* and seventh and sixth days were specially auspicious for his worship.[205] These elements appear to have been due to non-Āryan influences.

Familiarity with The Magas:

One of the important features of Sun-cult in India has been its association with a foreign priesthood known as the Magas. The advent of these fire-sun-worshipping priests from the Śākadvīpa marks the beginnings of new traditions in solar cult.[206] The *Mahābhārata* appears to have been familiar with them as they are mentioned for the first time in this work. It is said that there are four respected *janapadas* in the Śākadvīpa—Mañga, Maśaka, Mānasā and Mandaga. The Mañga *janapada* is inhabited by mostly the Brāhmaṇas.[207] Besides, Mihira—the Magian Sun-god is explicitly mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* and is distinguished from its Indian counterpart-Mitra in one and the same line.[208] Further the legend of Jamadagni mentioning the offer of umbrella and boots by Sūrya to him may be regarded as containing the nationalised version of the Magian tradition of providing boots etc. to the Sun-images. In view of these it is reasonable to suggest that the Epic stream was familiar with the Magian tradition, but no impact of it except in the adoption of name is traceable in the Epic Sun-cult. In the *Mahābhārata* no appreciable influence of the Magian tradition is traceable in the Sun-cult while in the *Rāmāyaṇa* there is neither reference to the Magas nor to Mihira.

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[199] *MBH.*, III.3.33—*puṣpopahārairbalibhiraracayitvā divākaraṁ.*

[200] Ibid., III.3.29,42.

[201] Hopkins, *E.M.*, pp. 72-73.

[202] Banerjea, J.N., *D.H.I.*, p. 433.

[203] *JISOA.*, III. No. 2, p. 125—*Lalitakalā*, No. 6, Oct., 1959, p. 46.

[204] Hopkins, *E.M.*, p. 73.

[205] *MBH.*, III.3.77,64.

[206] Bhandarkar, *V.S.M.R.S.*, pp. 153-54.

In view of the fact that the first wave of the Magas may have entered into India in the 5th cent. B.C. in the wake of the Achaemenid invasion,[209] the reference to the Magas and Mihira and other Irānian elements as boots and attendants like Māṭhara in the *Mahābhārata* may not be interpolations of a later date. The Epic world may have been aware of this new element in the Sun-cult from the very beginning. Since the *Mahābhārata* includes unorthodox thought also it is quite in harmony with the spirit of the Epic to have referred to these unorthodox elements but for centuries they could not make much headway and the orthodox literature ignored them till the 5th cent. A.D.[210] Their impact on the Epic Sun-cult is confined to the inclusion of the name of Mihira and a few legends like those of Jamadagni and Māṭhara.

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[207] *MBH.*, VI.11.36—*Mañgaśca maśakaścaiva mānasā mandagāstathā / Mañgā Brāhmaṇabhūyisṭhāḥ svakarmaniritā nripa.* The story of Matañg found in the Mahābhārata may be a reminiscence of the Maga's efforts to attain the position of the Brāhmaṇas. In this respect the Mañgās and Mañgās-Garudis-two non-Āryan tribes of Mahārāśtra bear resemblance to the Magas. These tribes were originally Sun-worshippers and were expert in magic. See, Dange, S.A., *Legends in the Mahābhārata*, pp. 358-359.

[208] *MBH.*, III.3.61.

[209] Srivastava, V.C., Antiquity of Magas in Ancient India, *PIHC.*, Bhagalpur, 1968 (69), pp. 86—94; Advent of the Magas or Iranian Priests in India, *Proc. Seminar on Foreigners in Ancient India etc., Calcutta University*, 1970, pp. 73—79. This question has been discussed in detail in the Chapter V.

Thus it is clear that the Sun was worshipped in the Epics neither because he is a form of Viṣṇu nor because he is the nearest approach to the effulgence of the Supreme. The fact is that the Sun-god has been given an independent status and his worship was not dependent upon his identity with Viṣṇu or proximity with Brahman. In reality the Epic Sun-worship is the continuation of the Vedic tradition and the adoptation of non-Āryan and popular trends of the Sun-cult. In the Epics Sun-worship assumed greater proportions and a sect came to be developed round him in the post-Buddha period which is purely indigenous in nature though the Epics are aware of the Magian tradition. Further in the Epics Sūrya's personality has been fully humanised and the Sun's family has come into existence. He has been associated with various legends where there may be traced the origin of the conception of halo and high boots, the latter under the Irānian influence. Though various names of the Sun-god such as Aśvins, Pūṣan, Savitri, Mitra, Ādityas etc. are referred to, there is a tendency, to regard these once-separate solar gods as different names and forms of one Sun-god. There are many traits in Sun's personality which may be regarded as Vedic survivals while others foreshadow Purāṇic trends of Sun-worship. Mixed concepts of the Trimūrtis are also found.[211] Sun-worship appears to be popular among all sections of the Epic society. The worship centres round the concept of *bhakti* with its paraphernalia. It is a revolutionary change from the Vedic tradition and thus it really heralds the era of Renaissance which culminated in the Purāṇas.

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[210] A manuscript dated in 550 A.D. found in Nepal gives equal status to the Magas and the Brāhmaṇas. Bhandarkar, D.R., Foreign Elements in the Hindu Population, *I.A.*, 1911, p. 18.

[211] Raychaudhuri, H.C., op. cit., p. 78; cf. *MBH.*, III.3.18, XIII.14.347 but S.K. De, op. cit,. p. 65ff finds no mention of this idea.

CHAPTER V

THE PURĀṆIC WORLD

The Purāṇic world presents before us a picture of the composite religion in which are blended the Vedic tradition of sacrificial religion, the semi-Vedic stream of Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and other unorthodox cults and the non-Vedic thought of Śāktism and Tantricism.[1] It is no exaggeration to say that the Purāṇas symbolise the fulfilment of the efforts of the orthodox Brāhmaṇas to synthesise divergent traditions of religions and social customs into one organic whole and thereby provide stability to the social and religious order.[2] This climax of the composite religion has been reached by the various stages of development which may be traced in the Purāṇic records. Broadly speaking, there are two main stages in the development of the composite religion.[3] Firstly, in the early Purāṇic works the Vedic and the *Smārta* traditions have been given prominence though the semi-Vedic thought of *bhakti, pūjā, vrata, tīrtha,* etc. are also casually mentioned. Secondly, in the later Purāṇas which originate from the 5th-6th centuries A.D. there is an increased emphasis upon the glorification of the semi-Vedic and even non-Vedic gods in a sectarian fashion. The prevalence of the ideas of *bhakti, pūjā, vrata, tīrtha,* the worship of images in temples and the influence of Tantricism are special characteristics of this stage.[4] The Vedic tradition is recognized only in theory and that too to give a semblance of orthodoxy to the semi-Vedic and non-Vedic cults and rituals.

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[1] Hazra, R.C., *Purāṇic Records,* pp. 215–227.

[2] Ibid., p. 226; Majumdar, R.C. (Ed.), *The Classical Age,* p. 297. It is a debatle point whether the Purāṇas contained religious matters from the very beginning or they incorporated these materials in the secondary stage. See, Upadhyaya, Baldeo, *Purāṇa-Vimarśa,* p. 127; Pusalker, A.D., *Studies in the Epics and Purāṇas,* Intro., p. 53.

[3] Hazra, *Purāṇic Records,* p. 228.

[4] Ibid., p. 219.

In the Purāṇic world Sun-worship displays these general trends to the fullest extent. In view of the fact that there had been a vigorous tradition of Sun-worship in the Vedic literature and there had been an indigenous school of Sun-worshippers from pre-Vedic times it is quite natural for the Purāṇas to incorporate these divergent traditions into one organic whole and to present a synthetic view of the Sun-cult in the true spirit of their aims. The Purāṇas were faced with a peculiar problem, as far as the Sun-cult was concerned in the sense that there had been a foreign tradition of Sun-worship too which appears to have been quite popular in the society from the 1st cent. A.D. onwards; if not earlier.[5] The indigenous thought of solar cult,[6] interalia, after the downfall of the Vedic system and the prevalence of a foreign tradition of Sun-cult really presented a sort of challenge to orthodox Sun-worshippers in whose response they composed this system of composite Sun-cult whose expressions are found in many early and late Purāṇas. In the first category are included the *Viṣṇu* (3rd-4th cent. A.D.),[7] the *Vāyu* (3rd cent A.D.),[8] the *Mārkaṇḍeya* (3rd or

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[5] The presence of the Magian tradition of Sun-cult is proved by the evidence of coins with Mihira legend and Sun-images with Irānian traits from the Kuṣāṇa period onwards. Banerjea, J.N., *D.H.I.*, p. 433.

[6] The reference to a sect of Sun-worshippers—*'Sauras'* in the *Mahābhārata* (VII.82.16) shows the emergence of non-Vedic trend in the post-Vedic period.

[7] It has been dated differently: Pargiter, *A.I.H.T.*, p. 80 (not earlier than the 5th cent. A.D.), Farquhar, *O.R.L.I.*, p. 143 (400 A.D.); Winternitz, *H.I.L.*, p. 545 fn. 2 (5th cent. A.D.); Vaidya, C.V., *History of Mediaeval Hindu India*, vol. I, p. 350 and *JBBRAS*, 1925, p. 155 (9th cent. A.D.); Dikshitar, V.R.R., *PIHC*, XIII, pp. 46—50 and *IHQ*, VIII, pp. 370-71 (6th or 7th cent. B.C. and major portion of present *Viṣṇu P.* existed from the beginning of the Christian era). The view of Hazra, *Purāṇic Records*, pp. 19—26 (3rd-4th cent A.D.) seems to be reasonable one.

[8] Hazra, *Purāṇic Records*, pp. 13—17.

4th cent. A.D.),[9] the *Brahmāṅḍa* (3rd—5th cent. A.D.),[10] and the *Matsya* Purāṇas (3rd—5th cent. A.D. and later).[11] The second category consists of the *Bhaviṣya* (500 A.D.—1200 A.D.),[12] the *Skanda* (700 A.D. and later)[13] and the *Sāmba* (500—1500 A.D.)[14] Purāṇas in the main so far as the Sun-cult is concerned. From the point of view of the chronology the first stage represented by the earlier Purāṇic chapters extends from the 2nd-3rd centuries A.D. to 5th-6th centuries A.D. while the second stage as reflected in the later Purāṇas begins as early as 6th century A.D. and attains apogee in the early mediaeval period of India (7th cent. to 12-13th cent. A.D.).

EARLY PURĀṆIC WORLD

Links with the Vedic Tradition:

The earlier Purāṇic texts continue the older Vedic and *Smārta* traditions of Sun-worship with minor changes and additions to suit the changed conditions. The Vedic concept of the Sun-god as atmospheric[15] continues to be adhered to by early Purāṇic society.[16] In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* the atmospheric concept of the Sun is stated when the Sun is described as the chief of the planetary system.[17] The descriptions of his chariot,[18] its movements,[19] its activities and his role as the arranger of the day and night,[20] seasons,[21] etc.—all these show his atmospheric aspect. The chapter in question cannot be later than the 2nd-3rd century A.D. In this very context reference is made to Vedic rituals.[22] He is worshipped by *Gāyatrī*.[23] It is enjoined that nobody should neglect the *Saṁdhyopāsanā*.[24] These references tend to show that Sun-worship in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* was the continuation of the Vedic tradition so far as the concept of the Sun-god and the ritual of the Sun-cult were concerned. In view of the fact that this chapter where these naturalistic descriptions of the Sun-god are found cannot be dated later than the 2nd century A.D.[25] it may be said that in the earlier stage in the Purāṇas Sun-worship was based upon the Vedic tradition. In this very *Purāṇa* a stage further than what has just been described is traceable in the legend of Satrājit.[26] It is said that at first the Sun appeared to him just as he is seen in the sky[27] but later on he appeared in human form after the request of Satrājit.[28] Similarly he is said to have returned to his place in the sky after giving

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[9] Hazra, *Purāṇic Records*, pp. 8—13.

[10] Ibid., pp. 17—19.

[11] Ibid., pp. 26—52, Karmarkar, A.P., *Karmarkar Comm. Volume*, pp. 77—81 regards it as the earliest extant *Purāṇa*.

[12] Ibid., pp. 167—173.

[13] Ibid., pp. 151—165.

[14] Hazra, R.C., *Studies in the Upa Purāṇas*, vol. I, p. 93. References to Sun-worship are found in many other late Purāṇas as *Brahma* (900—1200 A.D.), *Varāha* (800—1400 A.D.), *Viṣṇudharmottara* (400—500 A.D. and later), *Garuḍa* (10th cent. A.D.), *Kālikā* (between 10th and 11th cent. A.D.) but there is no additional information from those of the *Sāmba Purāṇa* in these late Purāṇas.

[15] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 30.

[16] It is specifically pointed out in the *Sāmba Purāṇa* 29.1-2 that the Sun was worshipped in earlier times in his atmospheric form—*Yathaitan maṅḍalaṁ vyomin sthīyatesavitustadā* | *Evamevapurābhaktaiḥ pūjyate maṅḍalākritiḥ* ||

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[17] *Viṣṇu P.*, II.8.1ff.

[18] Ibid., II.8.2–9.

[19] Ibid., II.8.28.

[20] Ibid., II.8.11-12—*Ahorātravyavasthānakārṇaṁ bhagavān raviḥ.*

[21] Ibid., II.8.67ff.

[22] Ibid., II.8.54—*Agnihotre hūyate yā samantrā prathamāhutiḥ / Sūryojyotiḥ sahasrānśustayā dīpyati bhāskaraḥ.*

[23] Ibid., II.8.53.

[24] Ibid., II.8.58—*Sa hanti Suryaṁ saṁdhyāyā nopāstim kurute tu yaḥ.*

[25] Hazra, *Purāṇic Records*, p. 24.

[26] This legend is found in many other Purāṇas such as *Vāyu P.*, IVC. 22; *Brahmāṅḍa P.*, III.71.

[27] *Viṣṇu P.*, IV.13-14—*Yathaiva vyomin vahnipiṅḍopamaṁ tvāmahamapasyaṁ tathaivādyāgrato gatamapyatra....*

[28] Ibid., IV.13.15.

Syāmantaka jewel to Satrājit.[29] The chapter in question must have been composed between the 2nd cent. A.D. and the 5th cent. A.D., most probably towards the end of this period, because there is a reference to *Horā*[30] in the preceding chapter whose continuation is the concerned chapter. *Horā* was known in India earlier than the 6th cent. A.D. as is evidenced by Varāhamihira[31] and before the end of the 1st century A.D. it was not used by the Indians.[32] In the legend of Yājñavalkya the Sun-god is mentioned as full of lustre of the three Vedas.[33] In the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* too the closeness of the Sun-cult to the Vedic tradition is expressed by the identification of the Sun-god with the Vedas. It is said that he abides in the Veda and his self is Vedic.[34] He is to be attained into the Vedānta.[35] His atmospheric aspect is mentioned in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* in connection with the legend of Rājyavardhana. He dwells in the sky.[36] His first form is luminous and can hardly be gazed upon because of its circle of splendour.[37] He is said to have come out of his orb and displayed himself in bodily form.[38] This legend occurs in a portion which may have been composed in the 3rd-4th century A.D.[39]

Many other elements in the Sun-cult as found in the early Purāṇas are continuations of the Vedic and *Smārta* traditions. The concept of the twelve Ādityas as identified with the twelve months of the year is also Vedic in origin.[40]

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[29] *Viṣṇu P.*, IV.13.18.

[30] Ibid., IV.12.33.

[31] *Brihat Saṁhitā*, pp. 7,9. The date of Varāhamihira is fixed at 550 A.D. See, *The Vākāṭaka Gupta Age*, p. 413.

[32] *The Classical Age*, p. 323.

[33] *Viṣṇu P.*, III.5.15; cf.*Vāyu P.*, 61. 20; *Brahmāṇḍa P.*, 2.35.23.

[34] *Mārkaṇḍeya P.*, CII.20, CIII.6.

[35] Ibid., CII.22.

[36] Ibid., CIX.63.

[37] Ibid., CIX.73.

[38] Ibid., CIX.76.

[39] Pargiter (Tr.) *The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, Intr. p. XX.

[40] *P.B.*, X.1.10; *S.B.*, VI.1.2.8; *B.A.U.*, III.9.5; *S.G.S.*, II.14.8.

It is a popular concept in the early Purāṇas[41] as will be discussed in the succeeding pages. Some of the constituents of the solar ritual as the *arghya*, the *ācamana*, the *japa*, the *saṁdhyopāsanā*[42] etc. are Vedic survivals in the Purāṇic worship. Sometimes references to sacrificial oblations[43] to the Sun-god are found in the early Purāṇas.

The continuance of the Vedic tradition in the early Purāṇic Sun-cult is attested by the Indor copper plate inscription (465-66 A.D.) where Deva Viṣṇu—a Brāhmaṇa of orthodox Vedic tradition is said to have given an endowment to a Sun-temple.[44] Kālidāsa also refers to the fact that the saints worship the Sun by reciting the hymns of the *Sāmaveda*.[45] All these go to indicate that in the early Purāṇic Sun-cult the Vedic tradition was given a place of honour, though non-Vedic traits such as sectarianism, *bhakti*, *pūjā*. etc. are also traceable in these texts.

Impact of Epic Sectarianism:

The indigenous tradition of sectarian Sun-worship reflected for the first time in the Epics had its impact upon the early Purāṇic world which ultimately terminated into full maturity in the later Purāṇic works. A critical analysis of the legends of Yājñavalkya, Satrājit, Brahmā, Aditi and

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[41] Roy, S. N., Early Purāṇic Account of Sun and Solar Cult, *Journal of Allahabad University Studies*, 1963 (64), pp. 39—59; Srivastava, V.C., The Purāṇic Records on the Sun-worship, *Purāṇa* vol. XI, No. 2, p. 232.

[42] *Viṣṇu P.*, III.11.39 refers to the *ācamana* and the *arghya* to Sūrya. *Mārkaṇḍeya P.*, CIX refers to the *japa* as one of the means of Sun-worship. In the Smritis the Vedic tradition of worshipping the Sun-god by means of the *japa*, the *arghya*, the *upasthāna*, the *saṁdhyopāsanā* etc. is continued which the early Purāṇas have tried to imbibe. See Kane, *H.D.S.*, vol. II, pt. I, pp. 313ff.

[43] *Mārkaṇḍeya* P., CIX.61.

[44] Srivastava, V.C., The Solar Cult as Revealed by the Gupta and the Post-Gupta Inscriptions, *Bharatiya Vidya*, vol. XXVII, Nos. 1—4, p. 42, fn. 7.

[45] *Kum.*, VIII.41.

Rājyavardhana will leave no room for doubt that the early Purāṇas were familiar with the ideologies of a Sun-sect. According to the early Purāṇas[46] Yājñavalkya worshipped the Sun-god as the gate of liberation, the fountain of bright radiance, the triple source of splendour as the *Rik,* the *Yajur* and the *Sāma* Vedas.[47] He as the fire and the moon is one with the Time and all its divisions of hours, minutes, and seconds.[48] He is to be meditated upon as the visible form of Viṣṇu[49] and as the impersonation of *Oṁ.* He is Brahmā, the origin and source of all gods.[50] All these descriptions tally with the Epic description of sectarian Sun-god[51] as well as with later Purāṇic accounts[52] of the Sun-sect. Though the three Vedas are identified with the Sun-god in this legend, yet it appears that there is some sort of break with the orthodox tradition as it is said that Yājñavalkya returned all Vedic lore that he has learnt at the feet of his teacher and procured a particular branch of *Yajurveda* which even his teacher did not know.[53] No doubt this *Vājasaneyi* branch of *Yajurveda* is included in the Vedic lore, the conflict between him and his teacher and return of the traditional knowledge is a pointer in the direction that the Sun-god had some sort of connection with the non-Āryan tradition.

The legend of Satrājit referred to in many Purāṇas[54] also contains sectarian descriptions of the Sun-god. Firstly, there is a reference to the *prasāda* form of the Sun-god.[55]

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[46] *Viṣṇu P.,* III.5; *Vāyu P.,* 69.209–210; *Brahmāṇḍa P.,* II.35. 14–26. It occurs in some late Purāṇas also; cf. *Bhāgavat* P., 12.6; *Skanda P.,* Nāgarakhaṇḍa, 4-5.

[47] *Viṣṇu P.,* III.5.75.

[48] *Viṣṇu P.,* III.5.16.

[49] Ibid., III.5.17.

[50] Ibid., III.5.23–*Ādityāyādibhūtāya devādīnāṁ namonamaḥ.*

[51] *MBH.,* III.3.36; *Ram.,* VI.105.

[52] *Sāmba P.,* II.

[53] *Viṣṇu P.,* III.5.10.26 & 27.

[54] Ibid., IV.13; *Vāyu P.,* IVC.22; *Brahmāṇḍa P.,* III.71.23.

[55] *Viṣṇu P.,* IV.13.14.–*Atra bhagavatā kiñcinna prasādīkritaṁ viśeṣamupalakṣāyami. . .*

Some sort of iconographic form is also indicated in his second appearance to Satrājit[56] which was definitely different from his circular form of the Vedic tradition. The legend is connected with Dvārakā which became the centre of sectarian Sun-worship of Magian type in the later Purāṇic period.[57] All these tend to show that the early Purāṇic society had been conscious of sectarian trends of the Sun-cult though purposely it avoided incorporating these trends out of its orthodoxy.

In the *Mārkaṅḍeya Purāṇa* the Sun-god has been invoked in a sectarian fashion several times. In the legend of Rājyavardhana[58] the Sun has been invoked in a typical sectarian fashion. He is the god who in splendour surpasses gods, Dānavas and Yakṣas, the planets and the heavenly bodies. He is the lord of gods[59] and the lord of Yogins. He is Brahmā, Śiva,[60] Viṣṇu and Prajāpati. He is the supreme gate to final emancipation. He is the wind, the atmosphere and the water, the earth and its mountains and oceans. His fire shall destory the universe at the end of the four ages.[61] Thus the Sun has been regarded as the cause of the universe[62] and the unity between him—the original source and the universe is expressed in these invocations. Similarly Brahmā invoked him as the cause of creation, dissoultion and per-

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56. Roy, S.N., *Paurāṇic Dharma Evaṁ Samāja*, pp. 400-401.
57. *Sāmba P.*, III; Sankalia, H.D., op. cit., pp. 212-214.
58. He is mentioned in the *Viṣṇu P.*, IV.1.34—36. It is tempting to identify this king with Rājyavardhana (6th cent. A.D.) of the Vardhana dynasty in view of identical name and identical faith of both these personages. Both are the Sun-worshippers but the early character (3rd—5th cent. A.D.) of the cantos where this story occurs and different geneology prevent us from identifying them. Rājyavardhana of the *Mārkaṅḍeya P.* appears to have been a mythical figure.
59. *Mārkaṅḍeya P.*, CIX.62-63.
60. Ibid., CIX.69—71.
61. Ibid., CIX.65.
62. Ibid., CIX.77.

manence.[63] In him everything consists and he consists of everything. His body is the universe. He is the sublime light whereon religious devotees meditate.[64] Aditi also worshipped him as the sustainer of the universe. He has a subtle form also by which he transcends his crude form. His subtle form is enunciated by uttering the word '*Oṁ*'.[65] He is the creator, the protector and the annihilator of everything.[66] It is suggested that these cantos were composed as early as the 3rd cent. A.D.[67]

In view of such descriptions about the Sun-god in the early Purāṇas it may be safely concluded that the Purāṇic world even in its earlier stages (3rd cent. A.D.—5th cent. A.D.) had been familiar with the sectarian tradition of the Sun-cult. It is quite probable that this trend was inspired and nourished by non-Āryan tradition.

It is significant to note that the picture of solar sectarianism drawn on the basis of early Purāṇic accounts is corroborated by the Gupta inscriptions[68] and iconography.

The Indor copper plate inscription of Skandagupta (465-466 A.D.) displays some sort of solar sectarianism when it says[69] that the Brāhmaṇas of enlightened mind worship him according to due rite (*viprā vidhivat prabudha manaso*) and their praises are directed solely to the Sun-god (*dhyānaikatānā* (*na*) *stuvaḥ*) who is limitless and who can not be measured by any god or demon (*Yasya antaṁ tridaś āsurā na vividur nn.. ordhavaṁ na triyag gatiḥ*). The Māndasor stone inscription of Kumāragupta (437-38 A.D.) also

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63. *Mārkaṅḍeya P.*, CIII.2.
64. Ibid., CIII.5.
65. Ibid., CIV.18—29.
66. Ibid., CIV.36.
67. Pargiter (Tr.), *The Mārkaṅḍeya Purāṇa*, Intr. pp. XX.
68. See Srivastava, V.C., The Solar Cult as Revealed by the Gupta and post-Gupta inscriptions, *Bharatiya Vidya*, vol. XXVII, Nos. 1—4, pp. 41—48.
69. *C.I.I.*, vol. III, p. 70.

contains the praise of the Sun-god in a sectarian fashion. He is the cause of the destruction as well as of the commencement of the universe. He is worshipped by the Siddhas, the Brāhmaṇas, the Gandharvas, the Kinnaras, and the Naras.[70] The Khoh copper plate inscription of the Mahārājā Sarvanā tha[71] (512-13 A.D.) clearly differentiates between the cults of Viṣṇu and Āditya. The Gwalior stone inscription of Mihirakula[72] which is devoted to Sun-worship indirectly refers to a Sun-sect when it calls itself as the famous proclamation of true religion (*Saddharmakhyāpanaṁ*). Many Sun-images of the Gupta period had been found from all over northern India[73] which clearly demonstrate that Sun-worship had developed itself into a cult-form.

Names and Forms of The Sun-God :

In the early Purāṇas Āditya emerges as the most popular name of the Sun with which he is invariably indentified.[74] Thus in the *Vāyu*[75] and the *Brahmāṅḍa* Purāṇas[76] this term is enumerated along with other names of Sūrya. The identity between Āditya and Sūrya is expressed in connection with the legend of Satrājit. He is called as a friend of Āditya. In the next line of *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[77] he is said to have worshipped Sūrya. It is said that when Sūrya took out the Syāmantaka gem from his neck, Satrājit could see Āditya.[78] In the *Matsya Purāṇa* the Sun-god is invoked under the name of Āditya[79]. Āditya is one of the various names under whom

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[70] *C.I.I.*, vol. III, pp. 79–88.

[71] Ibid., pp. 125–129.

[72] Ibid., pp. 200–210.

[73] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, pp. 432–36.

[74] Roy, S.N., Early Purāṇic Account of Sun and Solar Cult, *University of Allahabad Studies*, 1963, p. 41.

[75] *Vāyu P.*, XXXI.37.

[76] *Brahmāṅḍa P.*, II.13.125.

[77] *Viṣṇu P.*, IV.13.12.

[78] Ibid., IV.13.14 & 15.

[79] See, Dikshitar, V.R.R., *Purāṇa Index*, *Matsya P.*, 184.31.

Yājñavalkya invoked the Sun-god.[80] No doubt the Sun is called as Āditya as early as the *Rigveda*[81] but its emergence as the popular name of the Sun is really an achievement of the Epic-Purāṇa tradition particularly when we find that the etymological derivation of Āditya in the Purāṇas is based upon the semantic principle[82] which is definitely a departure from the Vedic practice of deriving it from the name of their mother-Aditi.[83]

The Ādityas represent a group of Sun-gods in the early Purāṇas. Generally their number has come to be fixed as twelve. In many early Purāṇas[84] the list of the names of these twelve Ādityas are given. A comparative study of these lists[85] will reveal that Viṣṇu, Indra, Dhātā, Tvaṣṭā, Pūṣā, Vivasvān, Mitra, Varuṇa, Aṁśa (its variants are Aṁśu, Aṁśumān) and Bhaga are common to all lists. Savitā is included in this group in the *Viṣṇu* and the *Matsya* Purāṇas. Aryamān is found in all except the *Matsya Purāṇa.* Parjanya is found in the *Vāyu* and the *Brahmāṅḍa* Purāṇas. Yama is included in this group only in the *Matsya Purāṇa.* Viṣṇu heads this list only in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* while Dhātā is the leader of this group in the *Vāyu* and the *Brahmāṅḍa* Purāṇas, while the *Matsya Purāṇa* continues the older tradition of regarding Indra as the head of the Ādityas. Viṣṇu is the youngest in the *Vāyu,* the *Brahmāṅḍa* and the *Matsya* Purāṇas. One significant omission in these lists is the absence of Mārtaṅḍa. But the Vedic tradition of regarding Mārtaṅḍa as born out of the dead egg of Aditi is separately mentioned in many early Purāṇas.[86] He is definitely a Sun-god.[87] The twelve Ādityas reside in the *Sūrya-maṅḍala*.[88] These twelve Ādityas are identified with the twelve months of the year. It is said that the Sun's chariot is occupied by these twelve Ādityas in twelve different months[89]—Dhātā in Caitra, Aryamā in Vaiśākha, Mitra in Jyeṣṭha, Indra in Śrāvaṇa, Vivasvān in Bhādra, Pūṣā in Āśvina, Parjanya in Kārtika, Aṁśa in Mārgaśīrṣa, Bhaga in Pauṣa, Tvaṣṭā in Māgha and Viṣṇu in Phālguna.[90] There is no mention of Sūrya and Āditya in this group which shows that the twelve Ādityas were different from them. They are the presiding deities of different months of the year and as such reside in *Sūrya-maṅḍala*. The concept of the Ādityas as the Time is more prominent than their being simply the Sun-gods. Since the Sun is responsible for the movement of time, these Ādityas are taken to be the Sun-gods also. In Mithraism Kronos—the Sun-god, represents a similar concept.[91] Among the Greeks and the Romans also the Sun under the influence of Semitic astrology was supposed to be the centre of the planetary system. Similar thought is envisaged in the early Purāṇas when the Sun is said to occupy the central position among the planets and is said to be moving to twelve Zodiacal signs at different times of the year.[92] Since the Gupta period knew about western systems of astronomy[93] it is quite probable that the complete identifications of these twelve Ādityas with the twelve months of the year and their connection with the twelve Zodiacal signs may be due to the western influence.[94]

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[80] *Viṣṇu P.,* III.5.23.

[81] *R.V.,* I.50.13.

[82] *Mārkaṅḍeya P.,* 100.14–*Ādityasaṁjñamagamadā dāvevayato abhavat.* Āditya is named so because he is the first born.

[83] Agrawala, V.S., *Matsya Purāṇa A study.* p. 21.

[84] *Viṣṇu P.,* I.15.126–131; *Vāyu P.,* 66.66-67; *Brahmāṅḍa P.,* 3.2.67–69; *Matsya P.,* 6.3–5.

[85] Roy, S.N., *Paurāṇic Dharma Evaṁ Samāja,* p. 48.

[86] *Vāyu P.,* 84.26–29–*Mriteṅḍe jāyate yasmānmārtaṅḍastena sansmritaḥ; Brahmāṅḍa P.,* 3.59.27–30; *Matsya P.,* II.36.

Many Ādityas such as Viṣṇu, Pūśan, Savitā, Aryamā, Vivasvān, Bhaga are invoked independently also of this group. When they are referred to individually they are regular Sun-gods.[95] The solar origin of even Viṣṇu who has carved out an independent cult around himself is not forgotten in the early Purāṇas. There is no difference between *Sūrya-Śakti* and *Vaiṣṇavī-Śakti*.[96] Sūrya is the spiritual self of Viṣṇu.[97] Savitri, Bhāskara, Sūrya, Vivasvat, Āditya are some of the names of the Sun-god[98] under whom Yājñavalkya prayed him.[99] Savitri is identified with the Sun-god when he is said to be the cause of rain and the maker of day and night.[100] The identity of Vivasvān with the Sun is directly expressed when the former is said as rising and setting.[101] It is said that Sūrya began to be called Vivasvān in the *Cākṣuṣa manvantara*.[102] Satrājit[103] and Brahmā[104] also worshipped him as Vivasvān. Pūṣan has been compared with Āditya.[105] All these names of the Sun-god are enumerated in connection with the *Sauravratas* mentioned in the *Matsya Purāṇa*.[106] In the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*[107] the names of the Sun-god are mentioned as Āditya, Bhāskara, Bhānu, Savitri, Divākara, Pūṣan, Aryamā and Svarabhānu. Savitā, Bhāskara, Bhānu are some of the names of the Sun-god in the

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[87] *Matsya P.*, 9.86—*Mārtaṅḍamuttare Viṣṇumīśāne vinyasetsada.*

[88] *Viṣṇu P.*, II.10.19; *Matsya P.*, 126.25.

[89] Wilson, H.H. (Tr.), *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, p. 192.

[90] *Viṣṇu P.*, II.10.

[91] Frank Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*, pp. 107–110.

[92] *Viṣṇu P.*, II.8.

[93] *The Vākāṭaka Gupta Age*, pp. 415–17.

[94] Frank Cumont, *Astrology among the Greeks and Romans*, pp. 115–127.

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[95] Roy, S.N., *Paurāṇic Dharma Evaṁ Samāja*, pp. 49–53.

[96] *Viṣṇu P.*, II.11.

[97] Ibid., II.8.56–*Vaiṣṇavo anśaḥ paraḥ Sūryo yoantarjyotirasamplavaṁ;* III.5.17–*dhyeyāya Viṣṇurūpāya paramākṣararūpiṇe.*

[98] Dikshitar, V.R.R., *The Purāṇa Index*, vol. III, p. 683–86.

[99] *Viṣṇu P.*, III.5.15–24.

[100] Ibid., II.11.21.

[101] Ibid., II.11.5–*Vivasvānudito madhye yātyastamiti kiṁ janaḥ.*

[102] *Vāyu P.*, LXXXIV.29, *Brahmāṇḍa P.*, II.59.30. *Viṣṇu P.*, III.1.30.

[103] *Vāyu P.*, IVC.22; *Brahmāṇḍa P.*, III.71.23.

[104] *Mārkaṇḍeya P.*, CIII.5–12.

[105] *Viṣṇu P.*, I.9.63–*Sarvādityaiḥ samaṁpūṣā . . .*

[106] Roy, S.N., *Paurāṇic Dharma Evaṁ Samāja*, p. 53.

[107] *Mārkaṇḍeya P.*, CIX.64.

Gupta inscriptions.[108] The early Purāṇic account of the names of the Sun-god is corroborated by Kālidāsa also who might have flourished in the Gupta age.[109] Some of the names of the Sun-god in the works of Kālidāsa are Sūrya,[110] Savitri,[111], Ravi,[112] Bhānu,[113] Āditya,[114] Arka,[115] Vivasvata,[116] Bhāsvān[117] and Saptasaptiḥ.[118] From all these references it is seen that there is no mention of Mihira—the Irānian name of the Sun-god most probably due to the orthodoxy of the early Purāṇic world. Even in the Gupta inscriptions upto the middle of the 6th cent. A.D. there is no reference to Mihira. For the first time it finds a place in the Nirmand copper plate inscription of the 6th cent. A.D.[119]

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[108] Srivastava, V.C., The Solar Cult as Revealed by the Gupta and Post-Gupta Inscriptions, *Bhāratīya Vidyā,* vol. XXVII, Nos. 1–4. pp. 42-43, 45. Indor copper plate inscription and Mandasor stone inscription refer to Savitri and Bhāskara; Gwalior stone inscription refers to Bhānu; Khoh copper plate refers to Āditya and differentiates him from Viṣṇu.

[109] The date of Kālidāsa is a matter of controversy but many scholars are inclined to place him in the Gupta period; Keith, A.B., *H.S.L.,* p. 20; Macdonell, *H.S.L.,* p. 274; De, S.K., *H.S.L.,* p. 125. From the point of view of religious growth the view appears to be correct one because his works reveal that period of religious growth when the drift from the Vedic to the Purāṇic worship had been completed. See, Upadhyaya, B.S., *India in Kālidāsa,* p. 296.

[110] *Raghu.* I.12, II.15, III.37, IV.1, IV.47, VI.66, IX.25; *Kum,* VIII.41–44; *Ritu,* I.16; *Sak.,* VI.30.

[111] *Ritu.,* I.16.

[112] *Kum.,* VIII.43-44; *Sak.,* V.5; *Vik.,* III.7.

[113] *Sak.,* V.4; *Kum.,* VIII.40.

[114] *Megha* Pūrva., 43.

[115] *Raghu.,* V.35.

[116] Ibid., XVII. 48, X.38.

[117] Ibid., IV.66.

[118] *Sak.,* VI.30.

[119] This question of Magian influence on the Purāṇic Sun-cult has been discussed in detail in connection with the late Purāṇic accounts of the Sun-cult where its impact is incorporated in clear terms. Srivastava, V.C., *Bhāratīya Vidyā,* XXVII, (1–4), p. 46.

It is mainly the benevolent aspect of the Sun-god which is worshipped in the early Purāṇic world.[120] He is a great benefactor of humanity. He draws water for the eight months and pours them down during the next four months. It is due to the rain and heat produced by the Sun that the corn grows and as a result the world subsists. This is a recurring theme in the early Purāṇas.[121] Kālidāsa also refers to this aspect when he says that the Sun draws water from the seas[122] and his rain-giving rays are regarded as *amrita*.[123] It is due to his benevolent quality that he is called *Jīvana* and *Brahmasatkrita*.[124] It is the benevolent form of the Sun-god which is praised by Aditi in the *Mārkaṅḍeya Purāṇa*.[125] By his ardent form he draws up the waters for the benefit of the worlds, he bears the nectar that composes the moon and by which he produces the rain. His light-giving form tends to mature the whole kingdom of plants that are produced through the pouring forth of water. By his excessive cold-form he nourishes the crops of the winter season. By his mild form he causes the ripening of the crops. Thus Aditi praises him as the sustainer of the universe by his various forms. He is responsible for long life as is revealed by the legend of Rājyavardhana found in the *Mārkaṅḍeya Purāṇa*. The beneficial qualities of the Sun-god as the liberation from the sin, the acquisition of long life and prosperity and freedom from diseases etc. are described in connection with the *Sauravratas*.[126] Even Brahmā who was praising him so that he may curtail his fiery glory to prevent destruction of his creation invokes him for his good qualities.[127] No doubt, there are references to the malevolent aspect of the Sun also in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*. For instance, it is said that in the beginning the Sun was full of fiery glory which might have destroyed the whole creation of Brahmā to avoid which Brahmā prayed him and was successful in pursuading him to contract his supreme glory.[128] Viśvakarman's paring of the Sun's rays, referred to in early Purāṇas[129] may also be taken as symbolising the curtailment of the excessive heat and the destructive power of the Sun. In spite of these references the Sun-god is essentially a loving god with all good qualities responsible for the sustenance of the creation.

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[120] Roy,, S.N., Early Purāṇic Account of Sun and Solar Cult, *University of Allahabad Studies*, 1963, p. 48.

[121] *Viṣṇu P.*, II.9.8—*Vivasvānaṣṭabhirmāsairādāyāpo rasātmikāḥ| Varṣatyambu tataścānnamannādapyakhilaṁ jagat*; *Mārkaṅḍeya P.*, 27.23. This act of the Sun is mentioned in the *MBH* also, III. 3.146.

[122] *Raghu.*, XIII.5., I.18, IV.66.

[123] Ibid., X.58.

[124] *Vāyu P.*, XXXI.37; *Brahmāṅḍa P.*, II.13.125. Such titles are given to the Sun in the *Mahābhārata* also.

[125] *Mārkaṅḍeya P.*, CIV.18—29.

[126] Srivastava, V.C., The Purāṇic Records on the Sun-worship, *Purāṇa*, XI. No. 2, pp. 241—243; cf. *Manu S.*, 5.105.

It may be remembered that the Sun god was essentially a benevolent god in the *Rigveda* and it is only in the later Vedic literature that his malevolent aspect has been emphasised due to climatic and other reasons. It is doubtful whether the early Purāṇic tradition of worshipping the Sun-god in his benevolent aspect is Rigvedic in origin because the geographical provenance of the Purāṇic world suffered from those very oppressing heat and rage of the Sun with which the Brāhmaṇic world suffered. Therefore, if the Vedic tradition was to have been at the back of this aspect of early Purāṇic Sun-worship it would have been more particularly the Brāhmaṇic tradition which should have been continued. The main reason for this emphasis upon the benevolent side of the Sun in the early Purāṇic world lies in the fact that the Purāṇic religion centred round the concept of a loving god whose grace is sought for by the devotees.[130]

Humanisation of the Sun:

As discussed before the early Purāṇas have incorporated the worship of the atmospheric aspect of the Sun which is a continuation of the Vedic thought. In spite of this the Sun could not remain primarily a representative of the natural phenomenon. There are developments in his personality towards humanisation in the early Purāṇas—a feature which attained its climax in the later Purāṇas. This movement is a natural concomitant of the prevailing theism of the times. The religious movement definitely swings forward from the abstract to the concrete.

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[127] *Mārkaṇḍeya P.*, (Pargiter's ed) CIII.6.—*Guṇapārayogyaḥ*.

[128] Ibid., CIII.13.

[129] Ibid., LXXVII; Agrawala, V.S., *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, Eka Sāṅskritika Adhyayana*, p. 165. cf. *R.V.*, I.146.4.

[130] Macnicol, *Indian Theism*, pp. 7, 20.

In the early Purāṇas the Sun-god is given a human personality. There is a hovering between the abstract and the concrete and ultimately the latter wins the ground. The legends of Satrājit, Aditi, Yājñavalkya and Rājyavardhana may be analysed in this connection. Satrājit was the friend of Āditya.[131] When prayed by him the Sun appeared to him as a fire-ball as is seen in the sky and there was no special characteristic of him.[132] But later on at his request the Sun-god displayed his human form with reddish eyes, dwarfish stature burnished as copper.[133] Similarly, to Aditi the Sun appeared at first in his natural form. But later on he revealed himself like a glowing copper[134] and was present in his very person.[135] To Yājñavalkya the Sun appeared in the form of a horse.[136] It is said in connection with the legend of Rājyavardhana that at first his subjects worshipped the Sun in natural form but later on they, on the advice of Sudāman-a Gandharva, went to a shrine of the Sun in Kāmarūpa and worshipped him in human form.[137] It is said that issuing from his orb with the same splendour as his disc possesses he manifested himself in bodly shape.[138] These references in the early Purāṇas leave no room for doubt that the human form of the Sun-god also came to be developed in the age and the trend was definitely from the atmospheric to the human form of the god. In all these legends the Sun appears at first in his natural form and it is only in the second instance, when the worshipper requested for his other form, that he assumed the human form. Thus the transition from the atmospheric to the human form is clearly traceable in the early Purāṇas. With humanisation it was natural for him to have a family. In the early Purāṇas the story of Saṁjñā and her shadow–Chāyā as wives of Sūrya is mentioned.[139] Sūrya has many issues–Yama, Manu and Yamī by Saṁjñā; two Aśvins–Dasra and Nāsatya and Revanta from Saṁjñā in mare's form; Manu, Śanaiścara and Tapatī from Chāyā. In some late passages of the early Purāṇas[140] the attendants of the Sun-god–Daṇḍa and Piṅgala are mentioned.

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[131] *Viṣṇu P.*, IV.13.11; *Vāyu P.*, IVC.22; *Brahmāṅḍa* P., III.71. 23.

[132] *Viṣṇu P.*, IV.13.12.

[133] Ibid., IV.13.15—*tatastamātāmrojjvalaṁ hrasvavapuṣamīṣadāpiṅgalanayanamādityamadrākṣīt.*

[134] *Mārkaṅḍeya P.*, CV.1.

[135] Ibid., 3.

[136] *Viṣṇu P.*, III.5.25.

[137] *Mārkaṅḍeya P.*, CIX., 59–61.

[138] Ibid., 75–78.

The Iconic Tradition and The Early Purāṇas:

From the above references to human form of the Sun it may be inferred that the early Purāṇas were conscious of the iconic tradition of the Sun-god that was prevailing in the society of that time.[141] But it is surprising to find that there is no direct reference to the image of the Sun in the early Purāṇic accounts. No doubt, references to the image of the Sun are found in some passages of the *Vāyu*, the *Matsya* and the *Mārkaṇḍeya* Purāṇas but they have been taken to be later interpolations in the early Purāṇas.

In the *Vāyu Purāṇa* it is stated that Yājñavalkya and his pupils were inflicted with the sin of *Brahmahatyā*. On the advice of Brahmā they worshipped the god–Vālukeśvara of twelve beams in the city of Vāyupur and had their bath in the tanks at that place. One of the four tanks was known as the *Sūryakuṅḍa*. Then they adored Vāḍava, the lord of the north and merged themselves into the world of Sūrya (*Sūrya Maṅḍalaṁ*). It is said that the Rākṣasas named Yātudhānas, ten in number, were the followers of Sūrya and wandered with the deity.[142] The above descriptions from the *Vāyu Purāṇa* may be taken as containing many basic ideas of the Sun-cult. Firstly, it shows the familiarity of the author of these passages with the image of the Sun. The reference to the Rākṣasas roaming along with the deity can refer only to the image of the Sun. Similarly the reference to the worship of god—Vālukeśvara of twelve beams in the city of Vāyupur may clearly mean to refer to the worship of an image of the Sun in a temple. Moreover, in the description of Vāyupur there appears to be an allusion to the setting up of an image of Vāḍāditya who is none else but the Sun-god.[143] Further, the presence of a *Sūryakuṅḍa* which became quite common in classical and mediaeval Hindu India[144] and was an integral part of the Sun-temple-complex presupposes the existence of the image and temple of the Sun at this place. In view of the fact that the legend of Yājñavalkya occurs in many early Purāṇas where there is no mention of the worship of Vālukeśvara or Vāḍāditya or *Sūryakuṅḍa* it may be said that these additions were interpolated in the original story in the later period. As it has already been stated, in the original story Yājñavalkya worshipped the Sun-god simply by recitation of hymns[145] and the Sun appeared in the form of a horse. Therefore it can be said that these passages in the *Vāyu Purāṇa* were added after the 5th cent. A.D. to meet the popular demands for image and temple form of the Sun-cult since these passages seem to have been influenced by the *Sāmba Purāṇa*[146] which refers to the twelfth form of the Sun which is similar to Vālukeśvara of twelve beams. It has been suggested that the Vāḍavas may have been foreigners like the Magas.[147] On the basis of internal evidences the suggestion may be accepted as probable one. It is specifically mentioned in the case of the Vāḍavas that their customs were varied and many while no such description is given in the case of the Rākṣasas and the Yātudhānas who may have been indigenous tribes of India while the Vāḍavas may have been foreigners and therefore the need was specially felt to emphasise the varied nature of their customs. Herodotus[148] informs us that the customs of the Magas were varied and different. Moreover, in the legend Yājñavalkya is said to have returned the Vedic lore and then worshipped the Sun-god as if the worship of the Sun-god was outside the sacred tradition of the Vedas. The god Vālukeśvara who was no other than the Sun-god is specifically mentioned as of twelve beams—a fact which is in conformity with the Magian tradition of worshipping the Sun in his twelfth form.[149] All these indicate that there may have been some foreign element in the Sun-cult as referred to in these passages of the *Vāyu Purāṇa.* This fact also makes these passages later than the 5th cent. A.D. as the orthodox literature starts mentioning about the Magas and their tradition of Sun-worship only after 550 A.D. when they were absorbed in the Hindu society and were given equal status with the Brāhmaṇas.[150]

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[139] *Viṣṇu P.*, III.2; *Mārkaṇḍeya P.*, LXXVII.1–42.

[140] *Matsya P.*, XI.32.36.

[141] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 434ff. Actual pieces of Sun-images of the Kuṣāṇa and the Gupta periods have been found and the Gupta inscriptions also testify to the fact that there had been Sun-temples in the Gupta period. See. Srivastava, V.C., *Bhāratīya Vidyā*, XXVII, (1–4), pp. 41–48.

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[142] *Vāyu P.*, 69—128—*Sūryasyānucara hyete saḥ tena bhramanti.*

[143] Patil, D.R., *Cultural History from the Vāyu Purāṇa*, p. 67; cf. Appendix 1122.

[144] Sankalia, *AGK.*, pp. 212—14.

[145] *Viṣṇu P.*, III.5.25.

[146] *Sāmba P.*, III.3—*dvādasabhāgena mitreṇa.*

In another late passage the *Vāyu Purāṇa* expressly states that in the Gayā *tīrtha*[151] there are installed four images of Sūrya which are expressions of four different *Yugas* and if they are seen, touched and worshipped liberation of ancestors is guaranteed. According to Hazra this passage is quite late but certainly earlier than 1400 A.D.[152]

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[147] Patil, D.R.. op.cit p. 192.

[148] *The Histories,* II.67–69.

[149] *Sāmba P.,* III.3.

[150] Bhandarkar, D.R., Foreign Element in Indian Population *I.A.* 1911 Jan., p. 18. Mihira—the Irānian form of the Sun is mentioned for the first time in the Nirmand inscription (6th cent. A.D.). See, Srivastava, V.C., *Bhāratīya Vidyā* XXVII, Nos. 1–4, p. 46.

[151] *Vāyu P.,* CVIII.. 36.

The *Matsya Purāṇa*[153] gives detailed instructions regarding the construction of Sun-images thereby indicating that the practice of making images for the Sun-god was already an established fact. It says that the image of the Sun should be made with beautiful eyes, seated in a chariot and holding a lotus. There should be seven horses and one *cakra* in the chariot of the Sun and a coronet beaming red on his head. He should be decorated with ornaments and the two hands as holding blue lotuses and the latter should also be placed on his shoulder as if in sport. His body should be shown as covered with a bodice of two pieces of cloth. The feet should not be made, it should be brilliant, otherwise the sculptor would suffer leprosy. Daṅḍa and Piṅgala should be placed as guards with swords in their hands. Aruṇa as the charioteer and snake etc. should also be shown there. The Sun-god should either be seated on the chariot or on the lotus and hold a lotus. These passages referring to the Sun-image appear to be late but since there is no reference to Irānian features such as northerner's dress, high boots etc. which came to be incorporated in the orthodox literature from the 6th-7th cent. A.D. as is evident from the *Sāmba Purāṇa*[154] they cannot be later than the 6th cent. A.D. Since there is no mention of Sun-images in earlier Purāṇas like the *Viṣṇu* and the *Brahmāṅḍa* which were composed between the 3rd–5th cent. A.D.[155] these passages may be placed between 500–600 A.D.[156] They mark the end of the early Purāṇic tradition and usher into the beginning of the late Purāṇic traditions of the Sun-cult. Similarly Sun-images are referred to in connection with several solar vows but these passages cannot be earlier than the 6th cent. A.D.[157] Thus it may be seen that the earlier Purāṇic accounts upto the 5th-6th cent. A.D. are conspicuous by the absence of references to Sun-images. This fact is in contrast with the prevailing custom of making Sun-images in society from 1 cent. A.D. onwards as is evidenced by the iconography.[158] The only plausible explanation for the non-adoption of the tradition of Sun-images in the early Purāṇas seems to be that this tradition was alien to the Vedic tradition[159] hence they out of their orthodoxy ignored it.

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[152] *Purāṇic Records,* p. 17.

[153] *Matsya P.,* CCLXI. 1–7; XCIV.1.

[154] Hazra, *Studies,* vol. I., p. 57ff. Varāhamihira (550 A.D.) in his *Brihat Saṁhitā,* ch. 57, directly refers to these features.

[155] Hazra, *Purāṇic Records,* p. 175.

[156] Ibid., p. 176 assigns these chapters to circa 550–650 A.D.

Solar Vows in The Early Purāṇas:

No doubt the Vedic[160] and the Epic[161] texts were familiar with the ideas of fasting, resorting to severe penances and austerities etc. in honour of gods which are essentials of the vows but the development of the vows on an organized scale as the part and parcel of a particular religious faith is essentially a Purāṇic concept.[162] Even in many earlier accounts of the Purāṇas there are no references to them as organized rituals.[163] In the case of solar vows it may be seen that in the *Viṣṇu*, the *Vāyu*, the *Brahmāṅḍa* and the *Mārkaṅḍeya* Purāṇas there are no references to them, though penances and austerities, fasting in honour of the Sun-god etc. are several times referred[164] to. It is for the first time that in certain late chapters of the *Matsya Purāṇa*[165] the *Sauravratas* are mentioned. According to Hazra[166] these chapters may be dated between 550—650 A.D. Since he regards these chapters as later than the chapters of another group (53—57, 61, 68) which is also dated between 550—650 A.D. it may be inferred that Hazra would like to place the chapters on the *Sauravratas* towards the end of the bracket. S.N. Roy[167] would like to place these chapters earlier than 550 A.D. The tradition of worshipping the Sun-god by means of lotus as is displayed by these *vratas* definitely bespeaks of a period which is earlier than the time of the adoption of the Magian form of Sun-worship by means of images with Irānian features. Varāhamihira (550 A.D.) and the *Sāmba Purāṇa* (whose lower limit has been fixed at 500 A.D.) are fully aware of the Magian form. A manuscript found in Nepal dated 550 A.D. gives equal status to the Magas and the Brāhmaṇas.[168] Thus these chapters which are unaware of the Magian form cannot be later than 550 A.D. Since the week days mentioned in connection with these vows find mention for the first time in the Eran inscription of 484 A.D. these chapters can not be earlier than 500 A.D. Thus the solar vows came to be developed and incorporated in the Sun-cult at the end (500—550 A.D.) of the early Purāṇic age.

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[157] Hazra, *Purāṇic Records*, p. 48. However S. N. Roy, *Paurāṇic Dharma Evaṁ Samāja*, p. 165 takes it to be earlier than 550 A.D.

[158] Banerjea, J.N., Sūrya, Ādityas and the Navagrahas, *JISOA*, XVI, pp. 53ff.

[159] The *Sāmba* and the *Bhaviṣya* Purāṇas expressly state that the Irānian Magas were responsible for the introduction of this practice. See, Hazra, *Studies*, vol. I, pp. 31ff.

[160] *G.G.S.* III.1.28.

[161] *MBH.*, III.3.32 uses the epithet *driṇavratah* for Yudhiṣṭhira who worshipped the Sun resorting to severe penances. cf. III.3.33. *Ram.*, II.95.7. *Ete pare viśālakṣi munayaḥ saṅśitavratāḥ.*

[162] Hazra, *Purāṇic Records*, p. 228.

[163] See Roy, S.N., Early Purāṇic Account of Sun and Solar cult, *University of Allahabad Studies*, 1963 (64).

[164] *Mārkaṅḍeya P.*, CIX.49, CX.26; *Viṣṇu P.*, III.5.14.

The main solar vows are the *Kalyāṇasaptamī, Viśokasaptamī, Phalasaptamī, Śarkarāsaptamī, Kamalasaptamī, Mandārasaptamī, Śubhasaptamī*[169] and *Sūryasaṅkrānti*[170] in the early Purāṇas.

The *Kalyāṇasaptamī vrata* also known as the *Vijayasaptamī* is to be celebrated on Sunday of the 7th day of a bright fortnight. The observer of the vow should take bath with cow-milk first. The vow centres round the worship of the Sun with flowers, sandals, white clothes, incense, eatables, raw sugar, salt and fruits. Eight pictures of the Sun-god are to be drawn on the eight petals of the lotus. These eight Sun-gods should be worshipped by the recitation of a *mantra* having eight names of the Sun-god—Tapana, Mārtaṅḍa, Divākara, Vidhātā, Varuṇa, Bhāskara, Vikrānta and Ravi beginning with the pictures on the eastern, south-eastern, southern, south-western, western, north-western, northern and north-eastern sides. In the beginning and the middle and at the end he is to be worshipped as Paramātmā.[171] It should end with the *dāna* to the Brāhmaṇas. The rewards of this *vrata* are freedom from diseases, liberation from all sins and the attainment of prosperity and long life.[172]

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[165] *Matsya P.,* chs. 74—80.

[166] *Purāṇic Records,* p. 176.

[167] Roy, S.N., *Paurāṇic Dharma Evaṁ Samāja.* p. 165.

[168] Bhandarkar, D.R., Foreign Elements in the Hindu Population, *I.A.,* 1911, Jan., p. 18.

[169] *Matsya P.*, 74.2.3.

[170] Ibid., 98.

The *Viśokasaptamī* vow[173] is to be observed on the sixth and the seventh days of the bright fortnight in the month of Māgha. On the sixth day the observer should take bath with black sesamum and observe fast and celibacy. In the morning after rising, after the bath and the *japa* he should worship the golden lotus as Arka. On the seventh day he should observe silence and eat food without oil and salt and should give away the lotus and clothes etc. in charity. This makes the observer free from all sorrows and diseases[174] for a period of ten *padmas*. One who observes it with no particular desire attains unification with Brahma.[175] In the prayer a very pointed reference is made to the everlasting faith in the Sun.[176]

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[171] *Matsya P.*, 74.15 specifically qualifies Divākara as *paramātmā-prīyatāmatra bhagvān paramātmā divākaraḥ.*

[172] Ibid., 74.19.

[173] Ibid., 75. In the *Mahābhārata* III.3.64 the sixth and seventh days are regarded as auspicious for Sun-worship.

[174] Ibid., 75.4,11.

[175] Ibid., 75,12.

[176] Ibid., 75.4—*tathā viśokatā me astu tvadbhaktiḥ pratijanma ca.*

The *Phalasaptamī vrata*[177] is also a solar vow to be performed on the seventh day of the bright fortnight of the month of Mārgaśīrṣa. Here the Sun is to be worshipped by means of a golden image and golden lotus under various names—Bhānu, Arka, Ravi, Brahmā, Sūrya, Śakra, Hari, Śiva, Vibhāvasu and Tvaṣṭā, Varuṇa for the attainment of endless fruits, prosperity and the freedom from deseases and ultimately the attainment of the *Sūryaloka*. In this *vrata* the Sun-god has been identified with Brahmā, Indra, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Varuṇa which shows that he was regarded as the highest.

The *Śarkarāsaptamī vrata*[178] is to be observed on the seventh day of a bright fortnight in the month of Vaiśākha in honour of the Sun by drawing a lotus on an altar and reciting hymn sacred to Savitri and by incense etc. This is to be done for the attainment of sons and grandsons and final emancipation.

The *Kamalasaptamī vrata*[179] is to be kept on the 7th day of bright fortnight in the spring. In this *vrata* the Sun is to be worshipped in the form of a golden lotus by means of flowers, incense etc. and recitation of *mantra* sacred to the Sun under various names—Kamala, Viśvadhāri, Divākara, Prabhākara etc. This should be followed by gifts and food to the Brāhmaṇas. One who observes this ordinance becomes possessed of inexhaustible wealth and goes to the kingdom of the Sun.

The *Mandārasaptamī vrata*[180] to be performed on the 7th day in the month of *Māgha* enjoins the worship of the golden image of the Sun along with eight petalled lotus under the names of Bhāskara (the god of East), Sūrya (the god of South-east), Arka (the god of South), Aryamā (the god of South-west), Vedadharma (the god of West), Caṇḍabhānu (god of North-West), Pūṣan (the god of West) and Ānanda (the god of North-East). The worship by *mandāra* flowers is a special characteristic of this ordinance.[181]

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[177] *Matsya P.*, 76.

[178] Ibid., 77.

[179] Ibid., 78.

[180] Ibid., 79.

In the *Śubhasaptamī vrata*[182] the golden ox and golden cow as born of the Sun are to be worshipped by flowers, incense etc. and by the *mantra* to *Aryamā priyatāṁ*.

The *Sūryasaṅkrāntī vrata*[183] to be performed on the day of equinoxes or solstices enjoins the worship of the Sun by drawing light pettalled lotus under light different names—Āditya (East), Uṣṇārci (South), Savitri (South-West), Tapan (West), Bhaga (North-West), Mārtaṇḍa (North), Viṣṇu (North-East), Sūrya in the pericarp of the lotus. The *arghya* of water, sandal and flowers should be given on the floor to the Sun. One who observes it is honoured by the gods in the realm of Indra.

Besides these occasions the worship of the Sun is prescribed in general on Sundays by drawing 12 petalled lotus with red sandal.[184] The observer places Sūrya after salutation to the East. Divākara to the South-east, Vivasvān to the South, Bhaga to the South-west, Varuṇa to the West, Mahendra to Northwest, Āditya to the north, and Savitri to North-east. In the fore part of the lotus the horses of the Sun should be inscribed, in the South Aryamān, in the West Mārtaṇḍa, on the Northern petal Ravi and Bhāskara in the pericarp of the lotus. Here he has been described as the soul of the universe, the basis of the *Rik*, the *Yajus* and the *Sāma* Vedas. One who observes this ritual is freed from all sins. He goes to the solar region. In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[185] this form of Sun-worship is prescribed as one of the daily obligations to be performed by every house-holder. It involves the *ācamana, arghya* of water and recitation of a hymn invoking the Sun-god under various names such as Vivasvat, Bhāsvat, Savitri and Viṣṇu etc. It is stated that the *Sūrya-vrata* is one of the sixty ordinances explained by Śiva.[186]

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[181] *Matsya P.*, 79.5.

[182] Ibid., 80.

[183] Ibid., 98.

[184] Ibid., 97.5–9.

[185] *Viṣṇu P.*, III.11.39-40.

There are many common features in all these *Sauravratas* such as the employment of a golden lotus as the symbol of the Sun-god, its worship by means of flowers, particularly red, incense etc., the recitation of hymns invoking the Sun-god under different names, resort to fast and saltless and oilless food, their performance on the seventh day in a bright fortnight etc. In these *vratas* the Sungod has been conceived as all powerful and supreme and absolute devotion to him for ever is also referred to. These *vratas* display a fixed procedure of the worship, the supremacy of the deity and exclusive devotion to him. In view of all these it may be said that these *vratas* are connected with sectarian Sun-worship but their nature is essentially domestic. There is no reference to any regular image or public worship. In spite of their ultimate relation to cult-form they are in the direct line of the Brāhmaṇa-Sūtra tradition of worshipping the Sun-god by means of the *arghya,* the *ācamana,* the *japa* etc.[187] in symbolic forms of lotus etc. But there are references to the making of golden man on the lotus as the symbol of the Sun which clearly shows that the Purāṇic *vratas* were foreshadowing the iconic tradition.

That in the early Purāṇic world there had been various types of Sun-worshippers is well revealed by the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa.* The subjects of Rājyavardhana who worshipped the Sun-god included variety of Sun-worshippers.[188] Some of them paid adoration with their own bodies by presenting to him the *arghya* offering and presents and other oblations. The second variety was of those who gratified the Sun by maintaining silence. The third variety worshipped him by repeating the Vedic hymns. The fourth class consisted of those *dvijas* who propitiated the Sun by abstaining from food lying down on river sandbanks and wearied with austerities. The fifth category was of those who adored him by the oblations to the fire and day and night repeating hymns composed in honour of the Sun. The sixth variety consisted of those who worshipped the Sun by casting their eyes on him and standing there. It is said that Sudāman—a Gandharva informed them that the Sun can well be pleased by propitiation of him at a forest named Guruviśāla in Kāmarūpa. There they worshipped the Sungod in his sacred and beautiful shrine by means of incense, flowers, oblations, unguents, prayers, food, lamps and other offerings. This type of worship fulfills all the characteristics of Purāṇic *pūjā* which may be termed as the seventh category of the Sun-worshippers. This legend clearly shows that it is only through the last method that the Sun-god was gratified. It shows that the *pūjā* form of worship was getting popular though older traditions were also resorted to by persons. The *Sauravratas* also tell the same story.

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[186] *Matsya P.,* CI.63.

[187] Kane, P.V., op. cit., vol. II, pt. II, 705–740.

[188] CIX.50ff. Ānandagiri also informs us that Śaṁkara came into contact with the followers of a Sun-sect whose leader was Divākara. There had been six classes of devotees of the Sun. For details see *VSMRS,* p. 152.

The Sun-god in relation to other gods in the Early Purāṇas:

It has been suggested that the Sun-god occupies a subordinate position in relation to Viṣṇu in the early Purāṇas.[189] But it is difficult to agree with the view as it is based upon the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* primarily. It is well known that the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* is imbued with the sectarian spirit of the Vaiṣṇava cult.[190] It is no surprise to find the Sun-god as subordinate to Viṣṇu in such a Purāṇa. For example, the Sun is said to work by the power of Viṣṇu but the whole passage is of Vaiṣṇavite import because other prominent gods like *Śiva, Brahmā,* etc. are also said to operate due to Vaiṣṇavite power.[191] Moreover, there are many references in this very Purāṇa which disproves the thesis. The superiority of Sūrya over Viṣṇu and other gods is expressed when it is said in the *Viṣṇu*[192] and other early Purāṇas that the *cakra* of Viṣṇu, the *trident* of Śiva, *vimāṇa* of Kubera and *śakti* of Kārtikeya were made by Viśvakarmā out of the pared glory of the Sun. Further, in some early Purāṇas Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Sūrya—all four are regarded as 'indistinguishable[193] thus indicating the equality of all four gods. The place of pride that is given to the Sun-god in the legends of Yājñavalkya, Rājyavardhana, Brahmā and Aditi as discussed in the preceding pages and the reference to *Sauradarśana*[194] may tend to show that the Sun was occupying a prominent position. Further the Vaiṣṇava, the Śaiva and the Saura vows are treated on equal terms in the early Purāṇas.[195] In the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* Brahmā had to pray to Sun-god for the continuance of his creation—a fact which shows that the power of Sūrya was greater than that of Brahmā.[196] Sūrya and Śiva have been identified in some early Purāṇas.[197] Such descriptions are indicative of religious syncretism which is a characteristic of ancient Indian religious development. This tendency is seen in the Gupta inscriptions also. The Nirmand copper plate inscription informs us that the personality of the Sun-god under the name of Mihira was merged with Śiva.[198]. This trend travelled outside India also in South-East Asia as is evident from the combined worship of Sūrya and Śiva in *Sūrya Sevana* of Java and Bali.[199]

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[189] Roy, S.N., Early Purāṇic Account of Sun and Solar Cult, *Allahabad University Studies,* 1963, p. 41.

[190] *Viṣṇu P.,* I.8.

[191] Ibid., II.11.6–20.

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[192] *Viṣṇu P.*, III.2.11.

[193] *Matsya P.*, 52.23—*Brahmaṇā cātha Sūryeṇa Viṣṇunātha Śivena vā/ Abhedāt pūjitena syātpujitaṁ sacarācaraṁ.*

[194] *Vāyu P.*, 104.16—*Jñānārṇavatantra*, 16.131—34 also refers to it. See, Handiqui, K.K., *Yaśastilaka and Indian Culture*, p. 216.

[195] *Matsya P.*, ch. 95—101.

[196] *Mārkaṇḍeya P.*, CIII.

[197] *Matsya P.*, LV.3—5.

[198] *C.I.I.*, vol. III, pp. 288—89.

[199] Biswas, D.K., Sūrya and Śiva, *IHQ*, 1948, pp. 142; Majumdar, R.C., *Suvarṇadvīpa*, vol. II, pt. II, p. 106ff.

THE LATE PURĀṆIC WORLD

The late Purāṇas and the Upa-Purāṇas mentioned in the beginning of the chapter throw a flood of light on the Sun-cult as developed between the 6th century A.D. and the 12th-13th centuries A.D. The post-Gupta inscriptions and Sun-images and temples may be taken as additional evidences to confirm and corroborate the picture of the Sun-cult drawn on the basis of the later Purāṇas. The secular literature of the period also helps us in this matter.

Development of Sectarian Saura Literature:

The *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* and the *Sāmba Purāṇa* are the most comprehensive and complete documents of the Sun-cult of the Magian tradition as it came to be developed during the early mediaeval period of Hindu India. Most of the verses of the first group[200] of the *Sāmba Purāṇa* are found to occur in the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* which appears to have been the borrower from the former.[201] Similarly the verses showing sectarian form of Sun-worship found in the *Skanda,* the *Brahma,* the *Varāha,* the *Agni* and the *Garuḍa* Purāṇas must have been borrowed from the *Sāmba Purāṇa*.[202] Thus of all the extant Purāṇas the *Sāmba Purāṇa* appears to be the earliest work of the *Sauras* from which other Purāṇas borrowed materials and incorporated them in their works at different later dates. A vast *Saura* literature came to be developed as is evidenced by notices of such works in the literature of India. Unfortunately most of these works have been lost and the *Sāmba Purāṇa* is the only extant *Saura* work. It developed in various stages at hands of different persons.[203] D. R. Bhandarkar[204] mentions a *Sūrya Purāṇa* which was known to the Śākadvīpa Brāhmaṇas named as Sevakas living round about Jodhpur but he is quite ignorant of its nature and contents and it is difficult to say whether it is the same as the *Sāmba* or not.[205] The *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* mentions an ancient work dealing with the *Saura dharma* which was declared by Nārada.[206] It was an early work dealing with the duties of the *Sauras*. Hazra includes this work in the category of Upa-purāṇas. It may be dated earlier than 800 A.D.[207] There was another *Saura* work in the *Sauradharmottara* which is quoted in many digests.[208] It may also be regarded as an Upa-Purāṇa and can not be later than 900 A.D.[209] There are references to a *Sūrya-Purāṇa* in the *Tithinirṇaya*[210] of Caṇḍeśvara and the *Bhaviṣyottara*

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[200]. Hazra, R.C., *Studies in the Upa-Purāṇas,* vol. I, p. 57 divides the *Sāmba Upa-Purāṇa* into two groups: GROUP I—Chaps. 1—38, 44—46 and 84; GROUP II—Chaps. 39—43, 47—83. He has settled the dates of different chapters as follows (p. 93): GROUP I: Chaps. 1 (except verses 17—25), 2—15, 16, 18—21, 24—32, 34—38, 46 and 84—composed between 500 A.D. and 800 A.D. probably towards the beginning of this period; Chaps. 17, 22-23—added later than 950 A.D.; Chap. 33—added between 700—950 A.D.; Chaps. 44-45—inserted between 950—1050 A.D.: GROUP II: Chaps. 39—43; 47—83—added between 1250—1500 A.D.

[201]. Ibid., p. 59.

[202]. Ibid., pp. 83—88.

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[203] See Hazra, R.C., *The Sāmba Purāṇa*—A Saura work of different hands, *A.B.O.R.I.;* The *Sāmba Purāṇa* through the Ages, *JASL* XVIII, 2, pp. 90—111.

[204] *E.I.,* vol. IX, p. 279.

[205] Hazra, *Studies,* p. 100.

[206] *Saurā Dharmāś ca rājendra Nāradoktā mahīpate*; *Bh.P.,* I.4.88 had *Śrauta* in the printed (Venkaṭeśvara) edition though it mentions *Saurāḥ* as a variant of *Śrautāḥ.* The reading *Saura* appears to be the correct one in view of the fact that the above line is quoted in many literary works of later times. See, Lakṣmīdhara's *Krityakalpataru,* I, p. 25; Caṇḍeśvara's *Krityaratnākara,* p. 30; Narsiṁha Vājapeyin's *Nityācāra-pradīpa,* I, p. 22.

[207] Hazra, *Studies,* pp. 347-48.

[208] Gopālbhaṭṭa's *Haribhakta-vilāsa,* pp. 773, 808; Raghunandana's *Smrititatva,* II, p. 41, 48; Caṇḍesvara's *Tithinirṇaya,* fols. 12a, 13a, 13b; Hemādri's *Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi,* iii, ii, p. 249; Jīmūtavāhana's *Kālaviveka,* pp. 432-33, 443, 444, 447.

[209] Hazra, *Studies,* pp. 349.

[210] *Tithinirṇaya,* fols 2a.

(Berlin Ms.).[211] Weber also describes a manuscript of the *Krisṇapañcamī-śrāddhavidhi* which he claims to have belonged to the *Sūrya Purāṇa*.[212] As these topics are not found in the *Sāmba Purāṇa*, the *Sūrya Purāṇa* appears to be a distinct work of an early date but as no manuscript has come to light it cannot be dated in our present state of knowledge. There is a reference to the *Bhāskara Purāṇa* in the *Skanda Purāṇa*[213] which appears to be the same as the present *Sāmba Purāṇa* as the latter[214] calls itself as *Bhāskarasya Purāṇaṁ.*

Growth of Sun-Sect:

The later Purāṇic world witnessed the growth of a full-fledged Sun-sect along with all the paraphernalia needed for the development of a sect. There may have existed a Sun-sect in the Epic society and the early Purāṇic records may have been familiar with solar sectarianism in a veiled form but it was mainly in the later Purāṇic world that a full-fledged sect round the Sun-god came to be developed on an unprecedented scale. The late Purāṇic records throw a flood of light on Sun-worship particularly on its sectarian side. All the features of sectarian form of the Sun-cult are traceable in the *Sāmba*, the *Bhaviṣya*, the *Varāha*, the *Skanda* and other late Purāṇas. The unquestionable supremacy of the deity, the exclusiveness in devotion, the fixed procedure of worship and such other sectarian features are found in connection with Sun-worship in all these Purāṇas. The *Sāmba Purāṇa* at its very outset describes the Sun-god as the cause of creation, protection and destruction of the universe, as the soul of Brahmā, Nārāyaṇa and Saṁkara.[215] He pervades the universe in the form of Śakra, Vahiṇi, Yama, Varuṇa, Samīraṇa, Dhanada and others who crowd the quarters.[216] Here the Sun-god has been identified with the universe and the ultimate reality in typical sectarian fashion. The sectarian concept of the Sun-cult is expressed in the praise of the Sun-god by Vasiṣṭha as is mentioned in the *Sāmba Purāṇa.* In reply to the specific question of Brihadbala as to who is the highest deity, Vasiṣṭha opined that the Sun-god is the only visible and eternal deity who is the highest among the gods and ancestors and is the only source of energy, who never moves from his fixed position, who manifests the universe from himself in creation and absorbs it into himself at the time of dissolution. He is the only god deserving devotion and worship.[217]

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[211] Weber, *Berlin Cat.* of 1853 No.468, p. 135.

[212] Ibid., No. 1127, pp. 325 reads—*iti Sūryapurāṇe kriṣṇa-pañcamīśrāddhavidhiḥ samāptaḥ.*

[213] *Skanda P.*, V.3.

[214] *Sāmba P.*, 1.13.

[215] 1.1—*Namaḥ savitrejagadekacakṣuṣejagatprasūtisthitināśahetave/ Trayīmayāyatriguṇātmadhāriṇaviriñcinārāyaṇaśaṁkarātmane,*

Again sectarianism is stressed in the description of *Sūryaloka* by Narada. The Sun is attended by the gods, the Yakṣas, the Gandharvas, and the Apsarās, the three Vedas incarnate, the three *Saṁdhyās* incarnate and the Ādityas, the Vasus, the Maruts and the Āśvins, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra and many other lesser gods. The deity pervades the universe and is eulogised even by Brahmā and other important gods. The Sun-god is attended even by the Purāṇic trinity of gods—Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa and is thus placed above all.[218] The sectarian nature of the Sun-cult is again brought forth when he is described as creating the universe and various kinds of creatures in the form and capacity of Brahmā.[219] The supremacy of the Sun-god is expressed in explicit words when the evolution of the universe according to the principles of the *Sāṁkhya* system and the appearance of the Supreme Being as a luminary called Savitri at the prayer of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa etc. are mentioned.[220] The making of Indra, Varuṇa, Rudra etc. as attendants of the Sun[221] is a proof of the supremacy of the Sun-god. Rudra is said to have taken recourse to the Sun-god and eulogised him.[222] It shows the superiority of the Sun-god over Rudra. Thus the concept of the Sun-god as was developed in the later Purāṇas is that of a sectarian god. The sectarian character of the Sun-cult in the later Purāṇic world is evidenced by the presence of a band of followers of the Sun-cult known as the *Sūryabhaktas*[223] and by the emergence of a special class of Sun-worshipping priests known as the Magas and the Bhojkas or the Yājakas;[224] and by the development of a sectarian *Saura* literature as discussed in preceding pages. The reference to the *Sūrya-siddhānta* also known as the *Āditya-siddhānta* as distinguished from the *Traividyā-siddhānta*[225] clearly demonstrates that the system of Sun-worship had developed an exclusiveness which is quite befitting for a sect. The employment of flags and flag-staffs of the Sun-god,[226] the provisions of fixed methods and procedures for worshipping the Sun-god,[227] the evolution of a code of conduct for the Sun-worshippers,[228] the use of a sectarian mantra—*khakolakāyanamaḥ*[229] and elaborate rules and regulations for making Sun-images and temples and for other constituents of the ritual of the Sun-cult[230]—all these were actually products of a sectarian Sun-cult. *Bhakti* which is the basis of a sect is referred to several times in the late Purāṇas.[231]

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[216] *Sāmba P.*, 1.6.

[217] Ibid., 2.7—*Nātaḥ paratāro devaḥ kaścidanyonarādhipa* 9—*Sarvasyajagatonāthaḥ karmasākṣīvibhāvasuḥ;* 20—*tasmādanyatrabhaktirhimākāryyāśubhamichatā*... cf. *Bhaviṣya P.*, I.66.42—46; 49—63; *Brahma P.*, ch. 30.

[218] *Sāmba P.*, 6.13—19; *Bhaviṣya P.*, I.76.

[219] Ibid., 4.4.

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[220] *Sāmba P.*, 14.9—*tato acintyammahattejaḥ prādurbhūtaṁtamonudaṁ*/ 11—*Ādidevoasidevānāmaiśvaryyaccatvamiśvaraḥ*/ *Ādikartāsibhūtānāṁdevadevodivākaraḥ*. cf. *Bhaviṣya P.*, I.123.9.

[221] Ibid., 16. 4ff.

[222] Ibid., 16.25—35: cf. *Bhaviṣya P.*, I.124.8.

[223] Ibid., 38.10—*Nābhya Sūryecca tadbhaktaṁnavaṁādyācānya devatā.*

[224] Ibid., 27.3,4,22,23.

[225] Ibid., 28.15—*Traividyāsiddhāntaratāḥ Sūryasiddhānta vedinaḥ.*

[226] Ibid., 33.8.

[227] Ibid., Chs. 47—83.

[228] Ibid., 44.

[229] Ibid.

[230] Ibid., Chs. 30-31, 36-37; cf. *Bhaviṣya P.*, I.131,132.

The sectarian nature of the Sun-cult is corroborated by such terms as *Parama-Saura* and *Parama-ādityabhakta* applied to the followers of Sun-worship in the inscriptions of the period. The Māliya copper plate inscription (571-72 A.D.) informs us that Mahārāja Dhārāpaṭṭa of the Maitraka dynasty was a *Paramādityabhakta*.[232] The Sonepat copper seal inscription refers to Harṣavardhana as a *Paramādityabhakta*.[233] The Pratihāra kings—Rāmabhadra and Vināyakapāla are also described as the *Paramādityabhakta* in many inscriptions.[234] Viśvarūpasena and Keśavasena of the Sena dynasty (12th cent. A.D.) are referred to as the *Parama Saura*.[235] Besides these sectarian phraseologies there are sectarian descriptions of the Sun in the epigraphy of the period.[236]

The sectarian trend of the Sun-cult as propounded by the late Purāṇic records is attested by the secular literature of the period as well. In the *Sūrya Śataka* of Mayūra (7th cent. A.D.) the concept of the Sun-god is sectarian as his glory is described as surpassing *Viṣṇupada*[237] and he has been identified with the *Rik*, the *Sāma* and the *Yajur* Vedas. He is the source of *mokṣa* and *svarga*.[238] His supremacy is expressed when it is said that Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva became carefree after Sūrya has taken charge of the universe.[239] The sectarianism is again brought forth when it is said that the Sun can be known only by a few Yogīs as he is subtle and invisible inwardly though outwardly very vast and crude.[240] There is an exclusiveness in the devotion to the Sun-god when it is said that though all the gods are called the sons of Aditi of which Indra is the chief, it is only Āditya-the Sun-god who is really justified in assuming the name.[241] He is comparable to Śiva as both are capable of assuming eight forms[242] and is like Viṣṇu on account of his daymaking capacity.[243] His lustre is like that of Kārtikeya.[244] These descriptions of the Sun-god in the *Sūrya Śataka* of Mayūra clearly confirm the sectarian trend of the Sun-worshippers in the late Purāṇic world. Varāhamihira (550 A.D.) also refers to sectarian Sun-worship when he calls himself as *Ādityadāsa tanyastadavāptabodhaḥ* and *Savitrilabdhavara prasādaḥ,*[245] and also when he narrates the rules and regulations for the making of Sun-images.[246] Ānandagiri in *Śaṁkaradigvijaya* informs us about the existence of a Sun-sect at Subrahmanya in south India.[247] Thus the late Purāṇic records are corroborated by the epigraphy and secular Sanskrit literature of the period as regards the development of the Sun-sect in the early mediaeval period of India.

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[231] *Sāmba P.*, 38.7–12.

[232] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, vol. III, pp. 164–71.

[233] Ibid., pp. 219–21.

[234] *E.I.*, vol. XIV, p. 176; vol. V., p. 212.

[235] Maity, S.K. and Mukherjee, R.R. *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, p. 325.

[236] For details see Appendix 'A'.

[237] *S.S.*, 22—*prātaḥ prollaṅghaya Viṣṇoḥ padamapi ghriṇayevātivegāddavīyasyuddyām dyotamānā dahatu dinapaterdurnirmittaṁ dyutirvaḥ.*

[238] Ibid., 89.

[239] Ibid., 88.

Concept of the Sun-god:

In the *Sāmba* and other late Purāṇas the concept of the Sun-god is highly metaphysical. Though the atmospheric aspect of the Sun-god has not been forgotten he is something beyond and above the physical sun. He is even beyond the god in the Sun. He is the highest deity and the supreme Brahma. He is concrete (*Sakala*) and subtle (*Niśakala*). 'He is both the individual and the supreme soul and is both one and many. While residing as *Ksetrajña* in the material body this Supreme Being, who is both personal and impersonal, remains formless and is not contaminated by actions or influenced by the objects of senses. When transcending the three *guṇas* he is called *Puruṣa*. It is he who is worshipped in different forms by gods and men in the different stages of their life and who pervades the universe and is its protector and regulator.'[248] Such philosophical concept of the Sun-god is indicated in the *Sūryaśataka* of Mayūra[249] and a few inscriptions also.[250] In all the grants of the Kalacuris of Ratanpur the Sun has been praised as the 'foremost luminary' and the 'Primal Being'.[251] The influence of the Vedic tradition in this concept can easily be traced. In the beginning of the *Sāmba Purāṇa* the description of the Sun-god as the cause of creation, protection, destruction, whose manifestations are the three Vedas[252] appears to have been inspired by the Vedic tradition. There is no mention of Mihira in the list of the names of the Sun-god. In the Vasiṣṭha's praise of the Sun-god as the highest the influence of Vedāntic philosophy may be seen. In the evolution of the universe[253] the principles of the *Sāṁkhya* school are utilized. At several occasions the Sun has been described simply as the luminary[254] which is in line with the Vedic tradition. Mayūra's concept of the Sun-god is generally a continuation of the Vedic concept of the Sun-god. He describes the solar chariot, his horses, his movement in the sky, etc. All these show that the atmospheric aspect of the Sun is quite prominent in the mind of the worshipper.[255] In the inscription the atmospheric aspect of the Sun-god is continued.[256] The Vedic names of the Sun-god are continued in the later Purāṇas, inscriptions and the secular literature. Savitri, Sūrya, Āditya, Mitra, Vivasvat etc. are Vedic survivals in the later Purāṇic pantheon of the Sun-god. The concept of the twelve Ādityas—Viṣṇu, Dhātri, Bhaga, Pūṣan, Mitra, Indra, Varuṇa, Aryamān, Vivasvat, Aṁśumat, Tvaṣṭri. and Parjanya as identical with the twelve months[257] is also a Vedic survival. Ānandgiri's description of the Sun-sect as found in the south India shows that the Vedic concept of the Sun was the guiding principle of these sectarions as there is no reference to the Magian tradition.

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[240] S.S., 29—*tīvraṁ nirvāṇaheturyadapi ca vipulaṁ yatprakarṣeṇacāṇu/ pratyakṣaṁ yatparokṣaṁ yadiḥ yadaparaṁ naśvaraṁ śaśvataṁ ca yatsarvasya prasiddhaṁ jagati katipaye/ Yogino yadvidanti jyotiṣtad dviprakāraṁ savituravatu vo bāhyamābhyantaraṁ ca.*

[241] Ibid., 90.

[242] Ibid., 91.

[243] Ibid., 92.

[244] Ibid., 25.

[245] *Brihat Jātaka,* XVIII.3.

[246] *Brihat Saṁhitā,* ch. 57.

[247] Quoted by *VSMRS*, p. 152

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[248] Hazra, *Studies*, pp. 56-57.

[249] *S.S.*, 29.

[250] See Appendix 'A'

[251] Mirashi, *C.I.I.*, vol. IV, pt. II, pp. 404, 28, 44, 60, 76, 80, 92, 530, 51, 628.

[252] *Sāmba P.*, 1.1–6.

[253] Ibid., 14.

[254] Ibid., 14.9.

In the later Purāṇas the twelve common names of the Sun are Āditya, Savitā, Sūrya, Mihira, Arka, Prabhākara, Mārtaṇḍa, Bhāskara, Bhānu, Citrabhānu, Divākara and Ravi.[258] The occurrence of the name Mihira in this list shows that the Magian tradition was also accepted in these Purāṇas. Its influence can be seen from the fact that the *Śamba* and other late Purāṇas particularly prescribe the worship of the Sun in his twelfth form which is that of Mihira.[259] In the *Amarakośa*[260] Mihira is one of the synonyms of the Sun-god and is distinguished from Mitra. The name of Mihira occurs in Nirmand copper plate inscription.[261] Thus the sectarian concept of the Sun-god synthesised the Vedic and Magian concepts of the Sun-god. In between these two there had been the indigenous tradition of *bhakti*[262] centering round a human Sun-god. The Sun-god appeared in human form to Sāmba. He had a large family also as is discussed in the following pages.[263]

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[255] *S.S.*, 1, 18, 19, 44.

[256] See Appendix 'A'.

[257] *Sāmba P.*, 9.5ff. *Bhaviṣya P.*, 1.65.26b–29; I.78.58–60-

[258] *Sāmba P.*, 9.2, *Brahma P.*, 31.15.

[259] *Sāmba P.*, I.13 says that this *Purāṇa* is concerned with the twelfth form—*dvādaśākāraṁ* of the Sun. III.3.—*prītyā Sāmbasya tatrārkojagato anugrahāya ca sthito dvādaśbhāgena mitro maitreṇa cakṣuṣā.*

[260] *Amarakośa* (Poona Oriental Series), Digvarga, 30ff.

[261] *C.I.I.*, vol. III, 200–10.

The Magas and the Magian Tradition:

One of the most interesting features of Sun-worship in the late Purāṇic world had been its formal association with a foreign priesthood known as Maga.[264] In many late Purāṇas there are direct references to the coming of the Magas in India from the Śākadvīpa with a view to accepting the priesthood of Sun-temples. There is a legend concerning the advent of the Magas and their association with the Sun-cult in many late Purāṇas.[265] The relevant part of the legend may briefly be summed up as follows: Sāmba, the son of Krisṇa by Jāmbavatī was cursed by his father to suffer leprosy for his undesirable relations with the wives of Vāsudeva Krisṇa. On the advice of Nārada Sāmba worshipped the Sun-god by constructing a Sun-temple at Candrabhāgā (modern Chenab in the Punjab) to get cured of this disease. Since no Brāhmaṇa was ready to accept the office of a regular priest of this temple he sought the help of Gauramukha, the priest of Ugrasena. He advised him to get the Magas who were special Sun-worshipping priests of the Śākadvīpa. On this advice Sāmba went to the Śākadvīpa and brought eighteen families of the Magas and installed them into the office of the priest of the temple he had constructed.[266] In the earlier literature also such as the *Mahā-*

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[262] *Sāmba P.*, 38.10.

[263] Ibid., 26.

[264] *VSMRS*, p. 153.

[265] *Bhaviṣya P.*, 139; *Sāmba P.*, 3, 24, 26; *Brahma P.*, 20. There are slight variations in the details of the legend in these Purāṇas. In the *Varāha Purāṇa* (Ch. 177) there is no reference to the bringing of the Magas in this legend of Sāmba.

[266] *Sāmba P.*, 26, 48–*aṣṭādaśakulānīhmagānāmvedavādinām*. . ., 49–*āropyagaruḍesāmbastvaritaḥ punarabhyagāt*.

bhārata[267] and the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[268] the Magas are mentioned as one of the four castes of the Śākadvīpa but there is no reference to the legend of Sāmba.

From the 5th century A.D. onwards the Magas came to be referred to in association with the Sun-cult in the literary and epigraphic history of India.[269] The late Purāṇic data on the Magas are corroborated by Varāhamihira[270] who clearly instructs that the installation and consecration of Sun-images should be caused to be made by the Magas. The legend finds confirmation in an inscription at Govindapur in Gayā district dated the Saka year 1059 corresponding to 1137-38 A.D. In the opening stanza of this inscription the Magas are represented to have been brought into the country by Sāmba.[271] Their presence on Indian soil is again indicated by many Irānian features such as *avyaṅga, udīcyaveṣa* and *upanātpinaddha*.[272] Even at present there are the Śākadvīpa Brāhmaṇas in Rajasthana, Uttar Pradesh and a few other states of northern India.[273] All this evidence conclusively proves that a certain class of priests known as the Magas devoted exclusively to Sun-worship was brought into India from Śākadvīpa.

Identity of the Magas and Location of Śākadvīpa:

There are many problems connected with the advent of the Magas in India. These problems have a great bearing on the Sun-cult of the early mediaeval period of India. Firstly, the issue of the identity of the Magas and the location of Śākadvīpa may be considered. It has been held[274] that the Magas of the Purāṇas were no other than the Sun-worshipping Magi priests of Irān and the idea of locating them on a continent called Śākadvīpa must have arisen from the fact that they were foreigners like the Śakas with whom the Indians had been familiar since the second or the third century B.C. There is no doubt that the Magi priests became closely and indistinguishably associated with Irān after Cyrus extended his empire to Medea and Lydia,[275] but originally they were a priestly tribe of Medea,[276] a section of which worked their way into Zoroastrianism after the founder's death probably in the fifth century B.C.[277] Originally there had been fundamental differences between their way of life and that of Persians,[278] but later on there was a compromise out of which Mithraism was born not later than the 5th-4th cent B.C.[279] Before the Persian impact this cult was already influenced by the religions of Babylonia and Chaldea.[280] The chief features of the Magi-cult were their worship of the Sun-god and Fire-god under the name of Mithra with eastward position, the use of '*barsom*' and a belief in a dualist view of the world i.e. the division of the world between good and evil powers represented by light and darkness—Ahurmazdah and Ahirman[281] respectively. They were famous for magic and occult power. From the above review the natural inference appears to be that the Magas who came to India were originally the magic-expert, indigenous (non-Āryan?) Fire and Sun-worshipping priests of Medea whose faith was very much mixed up with the Chaldean and the Babylonian elements and by the time they came to India it must have been Irānianised.

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[267] *MBH.*, VI.11.36–38.

[268] *Viṣṇu P.*, II.4.69-70.

[269] Bhandarkar, *VSMRS.*, pp. 153-54.

[270] *Brihat Saṁhitā*, 60.19.

[271] Bhandarkar, *Collected Works*, p. 219.

[272] Rao, Gopinath, *EHI*, pp. 299–305; cf. *IHQ.*, 1952, XXVIII.

[273] Mitra, D., Foreign Elements in Indian Population, *Cul.H.I.*, vol. II, pp. 613–15. See *Magavyakti* of Krisṇadāsa.

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[274] Bhandarkar, *Collected Works*, p. 219. Jairazbhoy, op. cit., p. 153; Barth, op. cit., p. 257; Hopkins, op. cit., p. 544; Majumdar, R.C. (ed) *A.I.U.*, p. 465; Mitra, D., Foreign Elements in Indian Population, *Cul. H.I.*, vol. II, pp. 613–15. Alberuni (Tr. Sachau, I, p. 21) confirms that the Magas of India were no other than the Magi priests of Persia.

[275] Frank Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*, p. 9. Herodotus, II.67–79, Strabo, XV.I.68. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, VIII.I.23. *Avestā* refers to them once. In *Yasht* there are signs of the presence of Magi.

[276] Moulton, *The Treasure of Magi*, p. 9. Moulton regards them neither Āryan nor non-Āryan but as belonging to a low graded indigenous tribe of Medea.

[277] Ibid., p. 9, 13. Herodotus, I., 101, 132.

[278] Herodotus was aware of these differences specially in matters connected with the disposal of the dead. They exposed the dead body while the Persians burnt it. cf. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 57. Ghirshman, R., *Irān*, p. 156.

[279] Burns, E.M., *Western Civilizations*, p. 70.

[280] Frank Cumont, op. cit., p. 30 and 31 calls it as a composite religion, Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, pp. 187, 191.

Regarding the location of Śākadvīpa, no definite opinion can be expressed since there is no detailed reference to its situation in any of the Purāṇas or other sources. It is said that Śākadvīpa must have been situated in Irān[282] mostly probably in Eastern Irān[283] since the Śaka occupation of western portion of India where the temple of Mulasthān is supposed to have been built by the Magas, was principally the work of the Śakas of Eastern Irān.[284] In view of the facts that the Magas may have entered into India for the first time in the wake of the Achaemenian invasion,[285] the basis for locating them in eastern portion of Irān loses ground. If the view that they entered in the wake of Achaemenian invasion is correct, it is safe to suggest that they came not from one particular part of Irān but from different corners of Irān where they had spread after the conquest of their original home—Madea by Cyrus.

Antiquity of the Magas in India:

The question of the antiquity of the Magas in India is a very significant question in the socio-religious history of India as their advent and presence in India marks the beginnings of new traditions in solar cult[286] and ushers into an era of social mobility and flexibility.[287] It is a tragedy that such an important question of socio-religious history has been dealt with in a simplified, generalised and routine manner. We are made to believe that the Magas came in the wake of the Śakas[288] and therefore the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa period (2nd cent. B.C.—2nd cent. A.D.)[289] may be definited as the time for the arrival of the Magas in India.[290] This popular view was supported by the facts that the Magas came from Śākadvīpa,[291] that the earliest evidence for Mithra-worship is to be found on the coins of Kaniṣka,[292] that there is no Sun-icon of Irānian tradition of a date earlier than the Kuṣāṇa period,[293] that there is no definite literary reference to them before the 2nd cent. A.D.[294] Apparently the matter seems to be settled one but a deeper dig at the root of the problem will leave no room for doubt that the problem needs better treatment than was hitherto given. Some of the fundamental assumptions of this question may be challenged. Firstly, that the Magas came in the wake of the Śakas on the basis of Purāṇic references to Śākadvīpa as their home[295] may be challenged on the ground that there is no indication of any generic relationship between the Magas and the Śakas in any known literary text. There is not the slightest hint in the Purāṇas to any connection between the Śakas and the Magas as a community except that they both were foreigners and the latter came from a place referred to in the Purāṇas as Śākadvīpa.[296] It is simply surprising as to how from above references the inference has been drawn that the Magas came for the first time in the trains of the Śaka invaders.

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[281] Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, pp. 182—253.

[282] Barth, A., op. cit., p. 257, fn. 9.

[283] *A.I.U.*, p. 465.

[284] Sircar, D.C., *A.I.U.* (Ed), Majumdar, p. 121.

[285] Srivastava, V.C., Antiquity of Magas in Ancient India, *P.I.H.C.*, 1968, pp. 86—91.

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[286] *VSMRS*, pp. 153-54.

[287] Yadava, B.N.S., Some Aspects of the Changing Order in India during the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa Age. *Kuṣaṇa Studies*, Allahabad, 1968, pp. 76—78.

[288] Chattopadhyaya, S., *Achaemenids in India*, pp. 30-31 went to the extent of suggesting that the Magas were the Brāhmaṇas of the Śaka community. No doubt they were priestly class of Śākadvīpa in the Purāṇas, but no indication of any connection between Śākadvīpa and the Śakas is found in the Purāṇas.

[289] Bhandarkar believed that Kaniṣka ascended the throne in the 3rd cent. A.D. hence he suggested that the Magas must have entered into India as late as the 3rd cent. A.D. *Collected Works*, p. 220. Generally it is agreed that Kaniṣka ascended the throne in 78 A.D.

[290] Barth, *R.I.*, p. 258, fn. 9; *VSMRS*, p. 154; Bhattacharya, H.D., *A.I.U.*, p. 465.

[291] *Bhaviṣya P.*, ch. 139; *Brahma P.*, 20—71; *Varāha P.*, ch. 177; *Sāmba P.*, ch. 26; *MBH.*, VI.11.36—38.

[292] Stein, M.A., Zoroastrian Deities on Indo-Scythic Coins, *Babylonian and Oriental Record*, Aug., 1887, pp. 155—166.

[293] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, pp. 432—442.

[294] The earliest literary reference to them is that of Ptolemy (2nd cent. A.D.). See, Mcrindle, J.W. (Tr.) *Ancient India as described by Ptolemy*, p. 170.

Secondly, the coins of Kaniṣka with Mithra figure and Miiro inscription may simply be regarded as indicative of official recognition and royal patronage of this cult[297] rather than of the antiquity of the Magas in India.

Thirdly, the absence of Sun-icons of Irānian tradition before the Kuṣāṇa period may only indicate that the Irānian tradition of solar iconography could become a popular and established custom during the Kuṣāṇa period[298] only but that does not show that its introducers also came at that very time. A foreign custom always takes time to gain popularity in an orthodox country of rich traditions like India.[299] In the case of the Magas whose customs varied with Indians in many fundamental points and who indulged into many objectionable practices[300] according to norms of Indian culture it is quite natural that they should be accepted in society quite late after their first appearance on Indian soil.[301] Moreover, Indians had their own tradition of solar cult and iconography[302] and therefore the adoption of foreign traditions of solar cult must have taken place after sufficient thinking and time-lag. It is also very significant to note that ancient Irānians themselves did not represent the Sun-god in human form in the earliest times and they used to represent him by means of symbols. In one of the sepulchres of Darius near Naqshi Rustam Mithra is represented as a round disc. Next stage was that of human busts of Sun in later Mithraism.[303] Such human bust of the Sun is seen on the Bhārhut medallion.[304] The fully anthropomor-

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[295] *Bhaviṣya P.*, ch. 139; *Sāmba P.*, ch. 26.

[296] Herodotus, *The Histories*, I.101 expressly states that the Magas were one of the six tribes of Medea. *M.B.H.*, VI.11.36–38, regards them as one of the four castes of Śākadvīpa. cf. *Bhaviṣya P.*, ch. 139.

[297] Bhandarkar, *V.S.M.R.S.*, p. 154.

[298] Banerjea, J.N., Sūrya Ādityas and the Navagrahas, *J.I.S.O.A.*, XVI, p. 57.

[299] The remarks of R. P. Chanda, *The Indo-Āryan Races*, p. 88 about the cult of Gopāla holds good for the antiquity of Magas also—"As regards the antiquity of the cult of Gopāla it may be observed that Indians are extremely

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conservative in religious matters and refuse to adopt any cult unless it can be recognized as *Sanātana* or coming from time immemorial. Consequently absence of archaeological or literary evidence cannot be construed as a conclusive proof of the non-existence of the cult before the time of Bhāsa or Harivaṁsa."

[300] Herodotus, *The Histories* (Tr. by Aubrey De Selincourt), p. 71; Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 57.

[301] The Magas were given an equal status with the Brāhmaṇas in a manuscript of 550 A.D. found in Nepal. cf. Bhandarkar, D.R., Foreign Elements in the Hindu Population, *I.A.*, 1911, January, p. 18. In early Purāṇas they do not find a place except in an interpolated passage of *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, II.4.69-70. This is sufficient to show that before the 4th-5th centuries A.D. they were not accepted by the orthodox circles.

[302] Bhandarkar, *V.S.M.R.S.*, p. 153; cf. *R.V.*, I.115.1; I.164.46; III.62.10; *A.V.*, XIII.2,6,7; V.30.15; *S.B.*, VII.4.1.10; *Kaus. U.*, II.7; *M.B.H.* (Cr.), VII.58.15. The Sun-icons of Bodh Gayā, Bhājā, Lālā Bhagat and Anantgumphā are taken as examples of indigenous tradition of solar iconography. cf. Coomaraswamy, *H.I.I.A.*, p. 33; *J.I.S.O.A.*, vol. XVI., p. 54.

[303] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 438.

[304] Bhattacharya, H.D., *A.I.U.*, p. 465.

phic representation of Mithra was due to Hellenic influence as is evident by a monument set up by Antiochus I of 1st cent. B.C. This explains the absence of Sun-icons of Irānian traditions before the 1st cent. B.C.

Fourthly, the absence of references to them in the orthodox literature till the 5th century A.D. should not be taken as a positive evidence in favour of the theory of the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa period for the advent of the Magas. It is reasonable to believe that the Brāhmaṇic literature referred to them only after they were absorbed in the Hindu society. Due to the attitude of contempt which the Hindus adopted towards the foreigners in general the Magas did not find a place in the orthodox Brāhmaṇic literature[305] for a very long time after their first appearance on Indian soil. It is quite correct to say that a religious fact or institution might exist much earlier than the period at which it finds expression in literature.[306] Thus it is clear that the arguments put forward in favour of the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa period as the time for arrival of the Magas in India are based upon misconceptions and dubious grounds. They simply show that by the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa period the Magian tradition was an established fact.

Let us examine the available materials chronologically in the descending sequence. The inscription at Govindapur (Gayā District) dated 1137-38 A.D. mentions that the Magas were brought into India by Sāmba.[307] Alberuni (11th cent. A.D.) refers to the presence of Magi-priests in India.[308] The Ghatiyāla inscription dated 861 A.D.[309] informs us that it was composed by a Maga Brāhmaṇa. The Huṇḍa inscription dated 774 A.D.[310] refers to *Sūryadvijaḥ* which may stand for the Maga Brāhmaṇas.[311] The late Purāṇas from 5th-6th cent. A.D. onwards are fully familiar with them.[312] In the early Purāṇas only *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[313] refers to the four castes of Śākadvīpa as Marga (Maga in some Manuscript), Magadha, Mānasa and Mandaga. Varāhamihira (6th cent. A.D.) clearly instructs that the installation and consecration of Sun-images and temples are to be done by the Magas.[314] Several Gupta and Kuṣāṇa Sun-icons contain Irānian features[315] which show that the Magas who were the introducers of these features were present in the society of this period. The seals from Basārḥ, Bhītā, Sunet and Rājaghāṭ[316] belonging to the Gupta period show Magian influence. The fire-altar occurs on much earlier coins, for instance on those of Wema Kadphises[317] (1st cent. B.C.) and such Magian influence may be seen on Pañcāla coins of Sūryamitra and Bhānumitra.[318] On a local coin from Avanti (2nd cent. B.C.—2nd cent. A.D.) a solar standard is depicted.[319] In view of the fact that the *Sāmba Purāṇa*[320] describes about a flag-staff of Ravi in connection with the Magianised Sun-cult and the region of Avanti appears to have been under the influence of the Magian form of Sun-cult as is indicated by Varāhamihira[321] the evidence of this coin may be taken to indicate that the Magian tradition was present in the heart of India during the period from the 2nd cent. B.C. to the 2nd cent.

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[305] This is well illustrated by the fact that the early Purāṇas are silent about them while the later Purāṇas are fully familiar with them. cf. Hazra, *Studies*, vol. I, p. 40.

[306] Farnell, *E.R.E.*. vol. VI, p. 291 has rightly suggested—"nor can we safely date a religious fact by the date of the author who first mentioned it".

[307] *V.S.M.R.S.*, p. 153.

[308] Sachau's Tr., vol. I, p. 21.

[309] *E.I.*, vol. IX. p. 279.

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[310] Sahani, D.R., *E.I.*, XXII, p. 98.

[311] *V.S.M.R.S.*, pp. 153-54.

[312] Hazra, *Studies*, p. 30ff.

[313] *Viṣṇu P.*, II.4.69-70.

[314] *Brihat Saṁhitā*, ch. 60.19.

[315] *D.H.I.*, pp. 438ff.

[316] Ibid., pp. 198-199.

[317] Ibid.

[318] Srivastava, V.C., Solar Symbols on Sūryamitra and Bhānumitra Coins, *J.N.S.I.*, XXXI, pt. I, p. 9.

[319] Srivastava, V.C., The Religious Study of a Symbol on an Avanti Coin, *Memoirs No.* 2, B.H.U., 1968, pp. 133—36.

[320] *Sāmba P.*, 33.8.

[321] *Brihat Jātaka*, 28.3., *I.H.Q.*, 3 (Sept. 1949), vol. 25, p. 178.

A.D. The Mithraic element may be seen in the device of local coins of Vaṭāśvaka[322] which are attributed to Aśvakas of Alexander's time.[323] On many Indo-Greek[324] coins Helios and Mithra are represented which show that by the 3rd-2nd cent. B.C. the Magian tradition had penetrated India. Ptolemy (2nd cent. A.D.)[325] vouches for the existence of the *Brahmanai Magoi* in the south.

It is said in the *Brahmajālasutta*[326] which cannot be dated later than the 4th cent. B.C.[327] that the magic priests were held in disrepute in the time of Buddha. It is well known that the Magas were famous for their magic and occult power and they were in disrepute too in India on account of their objectionable practices. It is quite probable that the Buddhist text had Magas in mind while referring to the magic priests in the time of Buddha.

In the *Ārṣeya Upaniṣad*[328] there is a reference to a few Sun-worshipping tribes such as the Daradas, the Suhmas, the Punḍras and the Barbaras. In this group of tribes a few are non-Āryan and a few others are foreign tribes. The Punḍras may be regarded as low caste[329] while the Dardas may be identified with the Dardicae (Dardistan) inhabiting lower Indus valley in the Achaemenian period.[330] The Barbaras represent a general name for the foreigners and may have been connected with a Babylonian Sun-worshipping tribe as is evident from the name of Babbar for the Sun-god in the Babylonian inscriptions.[331] Any way it is clear that there had been some Sun-worshipping tribes of foreign origin present in India. In view of the fact that the *Ārṣeya Upaniṣad* is classed with old Upaniṣads as the *Chāndogya* it may be dated in the 4th century B.C. On these grounds it may be suggested that there had been some foreign Sun-worshipping tribes present in India in the 6th-5th cent B.C. The only foreign tribe which played significant part in the evolution of Sun-worship in India is that of the Magas. Therefore, the above reference in the *Ārṣeya Upaniṣad* may indicate the presence of the Magas in India as early as the 5th—4th cent. B.C.

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[322] Allan, *B.M.C.*, p. XXLVI.

[323] Pāṇini, IV.1.173 refers to them. *A.I.U.*, p. 45; *J.R.A.S.*, 1900, pp. 98–106.

[324] *D.H.I.*, pp. 139-40.

[325] Mcrindle, J.W. (Tr.) *Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy*, p. 170.

[326] Quoted by N. N. Vasu, *Archaeological Survey of Mayūrabhanja.*

[327] *A.I.U.*, pp. 407–9.

[328] Quoted by Belvalkar, S.K. and Ranade, R.D., *History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. II, p. 298.

[329] *Vedic Index*, vol. I, p. 536, cf. *K.B.*, VII.28, *S.S.S.*, XV.26, *B.D.S.*, I.2.14.

[330] *The Histories*, III.94.

Philostratos, a Greek writer, refers to a temple of the Sun at Taxila and according to Plutarch there was another on the Hydaspes to which the elephants of Porus ascended on the advance of Alexander.[332] Since the tradition of public worship of the Sun in temples was introduced by the Magas in India as is attested by the literary evidences[333] it may be said that the testimony of Greek writers shows the prevalence of Magian tradition in the 4th cent. B.C. when Alexander invaded India.

Recent excavations in West Pakistan have brought to light actual specimens of fire-altars in association with Sun-disc from Achaemenian levels at Bālambāt.[334] Almost in every room such fire-altars have been discovered which show that the Mithraic religion was a living faith in this part of India during the Achaemenian period. It is difficult to separate the Irānian religion from the Maga-priests. The presence of the Irānian religion presupposes the presence of the Magian priests under whose guidance only, the rituals could be performed.[335] In view of all these evidences we are inclined to suggest that the Magas entered into India for the first time in the wake of the Achaemenid invasion of the 6th-5th cent. B.C. The first wave of the Magas appears to have been confined to the north-west borders of India where the Achaemenian influence had been paramount. They continued coming in waves in the trains of foreign invaders. The second significant wave of the Magas came in the wake of foreign invaders in the post-Mauryan period. That the Magas came in waves is indicated by the *Sāmba Purāṇa*.[336] It appears that a third wave of the Magas who were the followers of Zoroaster must have left Irān for India as a result of the spread of Islam after the 6th cent. A.D. The Magas of this wave came to be known as the Yājakas.[337]

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[331] Jastrow, M., *Babylonian and Assyrian Religion*, p. 72. *Babbar*, a contracted form from *Bar* (to shine) —*bar*, is a name of Shamash—the Sun-god of Babylon. *Barbar* appears to be a loan word in Sanskrit.

[332] Cunningham, A., *Coins of the Śakas*, p. 22.

[333] Hazra, *Studies*, pp. 30ff.

[334] Dani, A.H., *Ancient Pakistan*, vol. III.

The suggestion that the Magas initially entered into India in the wake of the Achaemenian invasion is strengthened by many circumstantial evidences also. Firstly, it may be pointed out that the Magas appear to have played significant part in the Achaemenid empire[338]—a fact which may be best illustrated by the fact that a Maga was the leader of a revolt against the accession of Darius.[339] Moreover, Mithra-cult whose priests were the Magas was extremely popular among the military classes of Irān.[340] Further, the close geographical proximity of Irān and India coupled with close commercial, cultural and political contacts between

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[335] Ghirshman, R., *Irān*, p. 156.

[336] Hazra, *Studies*, pp. 95-96.

[337] Ibid., p. 96. cf. *Sāmba P.*, 30.22b. The word *Yājaka* has been substituted for the word *Bhojaka*.

[388] Ghirshman, R., *Irān*, pp. 156, 195.

[339] Ibid., pp. 138-39.

[340] Frank Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*, pp. 30ff. Majumdar, R.C., *The Classical Accounts of India*, pp. 280, 440. Ghirshman, *Irān*, p. 156; *E.R.E.*, VIII, p. 753.

Irān and India from very early times[341] make it more than probable that the Magas may have entered into India in the wake of the Achaemenid invasion of north-western India. It is also significant to note that there had been quite considerable number of foreigners in the Indian population of north-western India[342] in the 5th-4th centuries B.C. so much so that a foreigner named Tuśāspha was appointed as the governor of Saurāṣṭra by Aśoka.[343] It was in this very region that the Magas started their activities according to the Purāṇas.[344] The Magian cult was prevalent far and wide in the Achaemenian empire[345] and it is no surprise if it would have entered into India also in the wake of the Achaemenian invasion. There are evidences to the effect that the Śakas had been present in the Achaemenian empire.[346] Further, there are archaeological evidences to the effect that there had been close contact between India and Central Asia as early as the 5th cent. B.C.[347] Therefore, the Purāṇic description that they came from Śākadvīpa does not go against the theory of the 6th-5th cent. B.C. as the probable period for the advent of the first wave of the Magas.

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[341] Jackson, *C.H.I.*, vol. I, p. 331. Herzfield, E.E., Early Historical Contacts Between the Old Irānian Empire and India, *India Antiqua*, Leyden, 1947, pp. 180—84.

[342] Chattopadhyaya, S., op. cit., pp. 22-23; Mitra, D., Foreign Elements in Indian Population, *Cul.H.I.*, vol. II, pp. 613—15.

[343] Mookerji, R.K. *Aśoka*, p. 167

[344] *Skanda P.*, VI.76; *Sāmba P.*, 26.14; *Bhaviṣya P.*, I.72.4—6 refer to Mūlasthāna (Multan, Punjab) as the original place of the Magianised Sun-cult.

[345] Ghirshman, *Irān*, p. 156.

[346] Hamdan, Persepolis and Behistun inscriptions include Śakas within the Empire of Darius, *C.H.I.*, vol. I, pp. 302-3; Kātyāyana in his *vārtika* on Pāṇini's sūtra IV.I.75 mentions about the Śakas.

[347] Sharma, G.R., India's Contact with Western and Central Asia with Special Reference to Kauśāmbī C. 600 B.C.—500 A.D., Paper read at *the International Conference on the Art and Archaeology of Irān*, April, 1968.

Mithraism was spreading with phenomenal success[348] all over the ancient world. In its westward extension it became a formidable but unsuccessful rival to Christianity in the Roman Empire under Constantine,[349] while in its eastward extension it crossed Asia Minor, Irān and came to India only to be absorbed in the ever-expanding heart of liberal but vital India.

Magian Impact on the Sun-cult:

Another aspect of the Maga-problem is concerned with the question of their impact on the Sun-cult. It is not known as to how far these Maga-priests could influence the indigenous tradition of Sun-worship in ancient India. Certain Hindu names containing Mihira or Maga and recommendations of Magianised Sun-worship in the later Purāṇas are the grounds on which Weber propounded a theory of great influence of Maga-priests and their cult upon indigenous Sun-worship. He[350] claims, in fact, that the native Sun-worship was quite replaced by this importation. It is difficult to agree with him in view of the fact that there are many Purāṇas[351] which do not mention the role of Magian priests at all and continue the indigenous and national tradition of Sun-worship as found in the Vedas, the Brāhmaṇas, the Upaniṣads, the Sūtras, and the Epics. Some of the Purāṇas such as the *Kūrma* limit themselves to a description of the function of the Sun as the heavenly body in regulating time and seasons, in maintaining the planets in their position and in fostering the life of the plants and animals and make only a passing reference to the solar family. This description is in conformity with the Vedic account of the Sun-god. In the *Viṣṇu*, *Vāyu*, *Brahmāṇḍa* and *Matsya* Purāṇas the Vedic tradition[352] of Sun-worship had been continued.

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[348] Frank Cumont, op. cit., pp. 11—19, 33-34.

[349] Trever, A.A., *History of Ancient Civilization*, pp. 595-96.

[350] Quoted by Barth, *R.I.*

[351] Bhattacharya, H.D., *The Classical Age* (Ed.) Majumdar, p. 438.

[352] Roy, S.N., Early Purāṇic Account of Sun and Solar Cult., *University of Allahabad Studies*, 1963, pp. 41—45.

These Purāṇas reveal that the orthodox tradition of Sun-worship actually developed on the lines of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa's*[353] prescription of a golden disc to represent the solar orb and the Upaniṣadic[354] doctrine of the golden *Puruṣa* in the Sun who was identified with the Ultimate Being. The prevalence of this tradition even after the spread of the Magian tradition is attested by the *Kūrma Purāṇa*. The *Viṣṇu,* the *Vāyu,* the *Brahmāṇḍa,* the *Matsya* and the *Mārkaṇḍeya* Purāṇas were thoroughly imbued with the orthodox spirit of the Sun-cult. Even in the *Sāmba Purāṇa*[355] where the impact of the Magian tradition attains its climax the Vedic tradition has not been forgotten. Moreover, the name of the sect of which the Magas became priests is *'Saura'*—a Sanskritised form[356] which is sufficient to indicate that the Magian cult was thoroughly Indianised and only then it could become palatable to the orthodox Indians Further, the whole theology[357] of this system is so much Indian—a reflex of the teachings of the Vedas, the Upaniṣads and the Epics that the question of displacement does not arise.

The influence of the Maga-cult upon indigenous solar cult has been generally over-estimated. The fundamentals of the Maga-cult could not make much headway in India most probably due to exemplary assimilative and absorbing capacity of the Indian culture. Further, it might not have been possible for Maga priests to advance their cause because most of the features of the Maga-cult (especially its Irānianised form which reached India) were already present here. For instance, the worship of the Sun under the name of Mithra had already been prevalent in the native tradition of India as is revealed by the *Rigveda,*[358] the *Atharvaveda,*[359] the Upaniṣads[360] and the Epics.[361] The fire was also worshipped and was closely connected with the Sun in India right from the Rigvedic times. The dualist view of the world i.e. division of the world into good and evil powers and consequently the struggle between them and ultimate victory of the good was also a recurring theme in ancient Indian mythology.[362] The fight between Indra and Vritra which forms an important theme of the Vedic lore may be regarded as a fight between the powers of light and darkness.[363] The whole Epic story is taken by some scholars[364] as symbolising this struggle. In view of these similarities there was hardly anything new for Maga-priests to propogate in India. There is one significant difference between Indian Mitra and Mithraic Mithra. Mithra is credited with the slaying of the bull but we do not find any reference to this legend in the Purāṇas or other literature. No representation of this episode is found in the Indian art[365] though it was frequently represented in the arts of Asia Minor and Rome.[366] There are many rites of initiation etc. in Mithraism[367] which are not traceable in the Purāṇas. Therefore, it is suggested that the Maga-influence was negligible so far as the mythology, theology and philosophy of the Sun-cult were concerned.

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[353] *S.B.,* VII.4.1.10.

[354] *B.A.U.,* II.5.5.

[355] Hazra, *Studies,* p. 63. cf. *Sāmba P.,* 6.15; 12.8; 12.13; 24.7; 29.15; 30.18.

[356] Furquhar, J.N., *O.R.L.I.,* p. 153.

[357] Furquhar, *O.R.L.I.,* p. 153 compares it with Śaiva theology and considers it as a reflex of the *Gītā*. The chapters 55—83 of the *Sāmba Purāṇa* exhibit Śaiva influence.

Iconography and temples are two connected spheres where they appear to have exerted powerful influence.

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[358] *R.V.,* III.59. cf. Macdonell, *V.M.,* p. 30.

[359] *A.V.,* XIII.3.13; IX.3.18; III.8.1; V.12.1.

[360] *Taittirīya U.,* 1.1.1, 1.12.1.

[361] Hopkins, *Epic Mythology,* pp. 202–204.

[362] Frazer, J.G., *Worship of Nature,* vol. I, p. 596.

[363] See Macdonell, *V.M.,* p. 60.

[364] Laksmi Dhara, *Woolner Comm. vol.,* pp. 311–26. Ludwig, quoted by Pusalker, A.D., *Cul.H.I.,* vol. II, p. 65.

[365] Banerjea, *D.H.I.,* pp. 428–505.

[366] Frank Cumont, op. cit., Figs. 4–7, 25, 26, 35, 37.

[367] Burns, E.M., *Western Civilizations,* p. 71.

Though there might have been native tradition of image-making and temple-building for different sectarian[368] gods, yet it appears that the images and temples of the Sun-god were either not known, or if known, were not popular in India before the advent of the Magas as is evidenced by the Purāṇas.[369] The unpopularity of Sun-images may have been due to the fact that the solar deity itself was visible daily to every body and there was no need for its representation. Its orb was worshipped by the general masses.[370] For the philosophically inclined its artificial representation was meaningless since they found in its visible form a symbol of the ultimate reality.[371] Even if the tradition of image-making in the case of Sūrya might have existed it must have been on a very small scale as it is mentioned in the Purāṇas[372] that the masses worshipped the solar deity not in its anthropomorphic but symbolic forms of, disc, wheel, lotus and svastika etc. On the other hand, there are many features in solar iconography of the Kuṣāṇa, the Gupta and the post-Gupta periods which are unmistakably Persian.[373] These traits are northern dress, girdle round the waiste and high boots. They are

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368. Pāṇini and Patañjali informs us about the images of Hindu sectarian gods. cf. Puri, B.N., *India in the Time of Patañjali*, pp. 182-83; Agrawala, V.S., *India as Known to Pāṇini*, p. 358ff.

369. *Sāmba P.*, 29.2–6. It is interesting to note that here the Maga priests are not described as responsible for image-making but Viśvakarman—the native architect was responsible. It is suggested that Bodh Gayā, Bhājā, Lālā Bhagat and Anantgumphā Sun-images represent the native tradition of solar iconography. cf. Banerjea, J.N., *D.H.I.*, pp. 432—34.

370. *R.V.*, I.175.4; V.29.10; *S.B.*, VII.4.1.10. Banerjea, J.N., *D.H.I.*, pp. 137—40, 198-99.

371. *B.A.U.*, II.1, *Chāndogya U.*, 3.1.11.

372. *Sāmba P.*, 29.2.6. *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* (*Brahma Parvan*) refers to *maṅḍala* form of Sun-worship. In commenting upon *Āpastamba Dh. Sūtra*, II.11.29.16 Haradatta says that the Draviḍas used to worship Āditya by drawing *maṅḍalas*.

373. Myths Explaining Some Alien Traits of North Indian Sun-icons, *I.H.Q.*, vol. XXVIII, Banerjea, J.N., *D.H.I.*, p. 437.

found refered to in the literary texts[374] of India also. A comparative study of North Indian and South Indian Sun-images will reveal that these features are confined to North Indian tradition as they are conspicuous. by their absence in images of South Indian tradition. It clearly demonstrates that South Indian tradition of Sun-images developed on indigenous lines while North Indian tradition adopted Irānian features under the impact of the Magas.[375] The existence of a large number of Sun-temples in western part of India[376] where the Magas first established a Sun-temple at Mūlasthāna (modern Multan[377]) is again a pointer in the direction that actually the Maga-priests were responsible for starting this new tradition in the solar religion. It is natural to presume that these two traditions established by them were materially instrumental in propagating and diffusing the sectarian form of Sun-worship. They gave concrete and lithic representation to the imaginary and atmospheric conception of the Sun as found in the Vedas, the Epics and the Purāṇas.

Absorption of the Magas:

The acceptance of these foreign priests by the orthodox Hindu society presents another facet of the Maga-problem. It appears that they remained neglected for centuries after their first appearance in the fifth cent. B.C. as they are passed in silence by the orthodox literature till the 5th-6th cent. A.D. No doubt the presence of Sun-images with Irānian features from the Kuṣāṇa period onwards proves their popularity particularity among the foreigners and also among unorthodox sections of Hindu society during two centuries before and two three centuries after the Christian era. It appears that the orthodox sections of Hindu society had to accept them by the 4th-5th cent. A.D. on account of their immense popularity in the pre-Gupta society. The Gupta period has been famous for assimilative trends. Their policy of religious toleration and their efforts to assimilate and synthesise divergent traditions—orthodox as well as unorthodox, had its impact upon the Maga-problem also. By the middle of the 6th cent. A.D. they were absorbed in the orthodox Hindu society as is evident by the prescription of Magianised Sun-worship in the *Sāmba Purāṇa* whose lower limit goes back to 500 A.D.[378] That they attained a status equal to that of the Brāhmaṇas at this time can be seen from a manuscript dated 550 A.D. found in Nepal, in which the Brāhmaṇas and the Magas are given equal status.[379] Varāhamihira's (550 A.D.) instruction for making Sun-images according to Irānian tradition is also a proof in favour of the thesis that they were absorbed in Hindu society by the middle of the sixth century A.D. It is also significant to find that Sun-images of the Gupta period contain alien features but efforts have been made there to nationalise them.[380]

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[374] *Brihat Saṁhitā*, ch. 57 (45–8); *Viṣṇudharmottara*, III.67.1–5.

[375] Rao, Gopinatha, *E.H.I.*, p. 311.

[376] Sankalia, H.D., op. cit., pp. 59-60

[377] *Sāmba P.*, 29.2.6; *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, Ch. 139 too narrates the incident.

Factors for Magian Success:

Another aspect of the problem is concerned with the factors responsible for the wide popularity which they commanded and which had been ultimately responsible for increased vitality of the Sun-cult in the early centuries of the Christian era. The proselytising spirit of the Magas,[381] the state support that they enjoyed under foreign rulers i.e. the Indo-Greeks, the Scythians and the Kuṣāṇas,[382] the propaganda of the benefits of Sun-worship, especially its curative properties, their contribution towards image-making and temple-building of Sūrya whose absence must have been keenly felt, their allowance to extend religious privileges to women and men of lower castes[383]—all these factors must have contributed towards their temporary success but ultimately they lost their individuality since there was nothing distinctive about them.

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[378] Hazra, *Studies,* p. 93.

[379] *I.A.,* 1911, Jan., p. 18.

[380] Banerjea, J.N., *D.H.I.*, p. 435.

[381] Vasu, N.N., *Castes and sects of Bengal,* IV.56-57 suggests probable connection of the Sun-worship with Śuṅga, Kaṇva and Huṇa dynasties.

[382] Bloch, *Z.D.M.G.*, 1910, p. 723 believes that the theory that Sun-god cures leprosy, came from Persia. But as shown by the *Rigveda* and the *Atharvaveda* there was native tradition also that the Sun-god cures leprosy and other skin diseases. *Sāmba Purāṇa,* ch. 24, see *Mayūraśataka.*

It has been suggested[384] that the Sun-worshipping Magas were divided in course of time into two groups—of the Magas and the Bhojakas later on degraded as the Yājakas. Both are distinguished in the sense that the Magas used to meditate on the syllable 'M' while the Yājakas worshipped the Sun by burning incense, offering garlands and various other articles and muttering *mantras* though the aim of both is the same i.e. the attainment of final emancipation through *Karmayoga* to the Sun who resides in the phenomenal Sun and is both *Sakala* and *Niṣkala*.[385] It appears that the Bhojakas or the Yājakas or the Sevakas may have been indigenous priests of the Sun-cult on the ground that they are described as chanting Vedic *mantras* etc.[386] Later on they indulged into objectionable activities and practices and entered into matrimonial alliances with foreigners like the Magas. Then they came to be degraded as low or *apāṅkteya*[387] or Devalaka-Brahmins[388] (temple-priests). There is a reference to a tribe known as Bhojakas in the time of Aśoka.[389] It is not known whether the Bhojakas of Aśokan inscriptions and the Bhojakas of the Purāṇas were identical. If they were identical, it is just probable that due to the extreme popularity of the Magas in northern India they might have migrated to south India but there is no evidence of migration of any such tribe. Whatever might be the truth they enjoyed respect upto the eighth century A.D.[390]

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[383] Hazra, *Studies*, vol. I, p. 30.

[384] Ibid., p. 97.

[385] *Sāmba P.*, 27.

[386] Ibid.

[387] *Bhaviṣya P.*, I.140, 141, 146.

[388] Hazra, *Studies*, vol. I, p. 40.

[389] Mookerji, *Aśoka*, p. 21.

The Development of a Family:

The development of a family and attendants of a deity is a common feature of Hindu sects and cult. The later Purāṇas elaborately describe this feature of Sun-worship. Rājñī and Nikṣubhā are his two wives. Piṅgala,[391] the recorder of good and bad deeds of creatures, Daṇḍanāyaka, Rājña and Stoṣa,[392] Kalmāṣa (i.e. Yama) and Pakṣin (i.e. Garuḍa), Vyoman and naked Diṅḍi[393] also attend on him. Rājñī's another name was Saṁjñā or Sareṇu[394] and the Sun had two sons with her—Vaivasvata Manu and Yama Śrāddhadeva and a daughter named Yamī or Kālindī. The shadow of Saṁjñā was Chāyā who is said to be the same as Nikṣubhā and is identified with Prithvī. From Chāyā the Sun got Śrutaśravas and Śrutakarman and a daughter known as Tapatī. The other sons of the Sun-god were two Aśvins named Nāsatya and Dasra (from Saṁjñā in Kuru country) and Revanta with the body of a horse having bow and arrows. There is a reference[395] to the eighteen attendants of the Sun. Indra under the name of Daṅḍanāyaka[396] on the left side of the Sun was engaged by the latter to rule over the world with his *daṅḍa* and *nīti*. Agni known as Piṅgala on the right side of the Sun was engaged in checking the good and bad deeds of all creatures. The two Aśvins stood on two sides of the Sun. Kārtikeya and Hara stood at the eastern gate under the name of Rājña and Stoṣa respectively. Yama and Garuḍa assumed the names of Kalmāṣa and Pakṣin who stood with two asses at the gate. On the south stood Citragupta and Kālā under the names of Jānḍakāra and Māṭhara, on the west stood Varuṇa and Sāgara under the names of Prāpnuyāna and Kṣutāpa respectively, on the north stood Kubera and Vināyaka and on the east stood Revanta and Rudra, the latter under the name of Diṅḍi[397] and also Śrī, Mahāśvetā and Mātris. Besides these chief eighteen attendants,[398] Soma is described as an attendant deity of the Sun at one place[399] and there were fourteen other attendants. In the list of attendants there are names which may be regarded as Irānian importation[400] such as Rājña and Stoṣa,[401] Māṭhara and Jāndakāra,[402] though there is an effort to Indianise them by giving them indigenous origin as mentioned above. In the art of the period these attendants of the Sun are illustrated.[403]

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[390] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, vol. III, p. 217.

[391] *Bhaviṣya P.*, I.76.13 read *'piṅgalo lekhakaḥ'* in place of *'piṅgalo devakaḥ'* of *Sāmba Purāṇa*, 6.21b but the text of the *Bhaviṣya P.* appears to be correct one as the work of Piṅgala is described in many Purāṇas as that of a record-keeper. *Sāmba P.* 16.6b–7a; 7.2. In *Viṣṇudh* III.67.5–7 *Piṅgala* is described as *atipiṅgala, uddīptaveṣa* (*Udīcyaveṣa*?) *leckhanī-patrakara* and *carma-śūladhara.*

[392] *Sāmba P.*, 6.22a; 7.3a; *Bhaviṣya P.*, 1.76.13b,18 (corresponding to above) two names are Rāja and Sroṣa but in *Bhaviṣya P.*, I.124.13 and 22.24a they are Rājña and Srauṣa. cf. Ch.I.143.40a; *Sāmba P.*, 36.39 gives the names as Rājan and Toṣa. In the *Avestā* Rashnu (justice) and Sraosha (obedience) are described as companions of Mithra.

[393] *Sāmba P.*, 6.23; *diṅḍirnagnogratah,* see 7.4, 16.25. In *Bhaviṣya P.*, I.76.14,19; I.12.1 the words *tathā, agrataḥ* and *magnaḥ* are found in place of *nagnaḥ* and *nagnakaḥ* of the *Sāmba P.*

[394] *Sāmba P.*, 10.17b; *Bhaviṣya P.*, I.79b; *Skanda P.*, VII.1.11. 65b.

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[395] *Sāmba P.*, 16.1–22.

[396] *Viṣṇudh*, III.67.5 refers him as Daṅḍin.

[397] *Sāmba P.*, 16.1.24.

[398] In *Viṣṇudh*, III.67.2–11 Daṅḍin (i.e. Daṅḍanāyaka) and a lion standard (dhvaja) on the left of the Sun; Piṅgala on the right, the Sun's four sons (viz. Revanta, Yama and two Manus) as well as his four wives (viz. Rājñī, Nikṣubhā, Chāyā and Suvarcasā) on both sides are mentioned.

[399] *Sāmba P.*, 36.41b.

[400] Hazra, *Studies*, vol. I, p. 45; Zachner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* p. 95.

[401] *Sāmba P.*, 16.8a; *Bhaviṣya P.*, I.124.21a.

[402] *Bhaviṣya P.*, I.53.1. mentions Māṭhara but not Jānḍakāra.

[403] See Bhattasali, *I.B.B.S., Dacca Museum*, p. 160.

The Method of Sun-Worship in Later Purāṇas:

The method of Sun-worship is elaborately described in the later Purāṇas. In the later Purāṇas many influences may be seen in the evolution of the methodology of Sun-worship—such as those of Vedic tradition, indigenous system, Irānian stream, Tāntric practices, and Śaiva theology.

The first important feature in the worship of the Sun was the introduction of image and temple of the Sun-god in contrast to the worship of the Sun in symbolic forms. This is expressly brought out in the later Purāṇas.[404] The rules for the construction of the Sun-temples and images are also given.[405] From the point of view of materials seven kinds of images are referred to such as of gold, silver, copper, earth, stone, wood and paint.[406] The dresses, such as *avyaṅga, paḍabandha* etc. of the Sun-images are mentioned.[407] It has rightly been suggested[408] that in the earlier chapters of the later Purāṇas the Vedic tradition has been given prominence though no doubt Irānian elements were already present in the Sun-cult of this period. There are references to six mediums of Sun-worship viz. fire, water, air, holy place, image and pedestal for the image of a deity.[409] There is no reference to Tāntric symbols like *yantra* or *maṅḍala* in these earlier chapters. The hymns in praise of the Sun are called

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[404] *Sāmba P.*, 29.2–6–*na purā pratimā hy āsīt pūjyate maṅḍale raviḥ/ yathaitan maṅḍalaṁ vyomni sthīyate savitus tadā// evam eva purā bhaktaiḥ pūjyate maṅḍalākritiḥ/ yataḥ prabhriti cāpy eṣā nirmitā viśvakarmaṇā// sarvalokahitārthāya sūryasya puruṣākritiḥ/ ...grihesu pratimāyās tu na tāsāṁ niyamaḥ kvacit....// devāyatana-vinyāse kāryaṁ mūrtiparīkṣanam//*; Ibid., I.17a–'*Sāmbasya ca tadollāsaṁ pratimāsthāpanaṁ tathā*'. It is omitted in the Venkateśvara Ed. but is found in Eggeling's *Ind. Office., Cat.*, VI, p. 1317.

[405] Ibid., 29; *Brihat Saṁhitā*. 57.46–48.

[406] *Sāmba P.*, 30.1-2–*arcāḥ saptavidhāḥ proktābhaktānaṁśubha vridhaye.*

[407] Ibid., 31.18.

[408] Hazra, *Studies*, vol. I, p. 63.

[409] *Sāmba P.*, 38.45.

Vedokta or *Veda-Vedāṅga-sammita.*[410] The three Vedas are said to attend upon the Sun[411] and the *agnihotragraha* (the house for the oblations to the fire) is an integral part of the Sun-temples.[412] The Vedic *homa* forms an important part of the worship, the *mantras* to be used are either Vedic or Purāṇic or both.[413]

But the Tāntric cult was becoming quite popular particularly in eastern India from 7th-8th centuries onwards[414] and the Sun-cult could not remain aloof from this development. In the chapters of the second group of the *Sāmba Purāṇa* there are many elements in the Sun-cult which are essentially Tāntric. The method of initiation is full of Tāntric influence. It involves the selection and preparation of the ground, selection of spiritual preceptors and disciples, offer of *arghya* to the Sun with the *mahāmantra,* drawing of a *maṅḍala* with the figure of a twelve-petalled lotus in it, performance of *homa* and of *tattvanyāsa* and *mantranyāsa,* worship of the quarter-guardians to whom fish, meat etc. are offered.[415] It is interesting to learn that the *mantras* with Tāntric symbolism are employed at every step. The drawing of *maṅḍalas,* the performance of various kinds of *mudrās* and *nyāsas* are in accordance with the Tāntric philosophy. The word *'Tantra'* has been used to mean not only procedure but also Tāntric works.[416] The methods of performing *abhicāra* rites and *bījas* in *mantras* and practice of *yoga* have also been given and six acts viz. *vaśīkaraṇa.*

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[410] *Sāmba P.,* 12.8; 12.13; 24.7 etc.

[411] Ibid., 6.15.

[412] Ibid., 29.15.

[413] Ibid., 30.18, 32.12.; 37.19 *'purāṇoktena mantreṇa'* . . .

[414] Chakravarti, C., *The Tāntras, Studies on Their Religion and Literature,* pp. 80–89.

[415] *Sāmba P.,* 39,41.

[416] *Sāmba P.,* 41.1 refers *to Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā;* 51.195: 55.99, 101; 57.15, 61.50; 68.9; 74.10. cf. Chakravarti, C., op. cit., pp. 19-20.

ākarṣaṇa, māraṇa, uccāṭana, vidveśana and *stambhana* etc.[417] are also mentioned.

Thus the Sun-cult appears to have adopted Tāntric practices in the later stage of the later Purāṇas. In spite of such influences Sun-worship remained free from some fundamental principles of Tāntricism. The concept of a female principle as the cause of the universe so characteristically developed in Tāntric philosophy[418] is conspicuous by its absence in the later Purāṇas. No doubt the Indian tradition of Sun-worship was aware of the wife of the Sun-god as early as the *Rigveda*[419] and the Epics and the Purāṇas are fully familiar with this tradition[420] but no such concept as of Prajñā of Tāntric Buddhism and Umā of Tāntric Hinduism could be developed round the name of Saṁjñā or Chāyā—wives of the Sun-god by the solar sectarians. It is significant to note that no image of the Sun with the female consort in Tāntric sense has been found so far.[421] It is a thought-provoking subject as to why the solar sectarians did not popularise this concept and convert it into Tāntric doctrine of a *Saura-Śakti* particularly when other sectarians were adopting it.[422] The Sun-cult was based upon the worship of a visible physical phenomenon of Nature[423] who is responsible for creation, sustenance and destruction of the world.

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[417] *Sāmba P.*, Ch.I.47–83. cf. Chakravarti, C., op. cit., pp. 38–44, 80–82.

[418] Majumdar, R.C. (Ed.) *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, p. 314ff.

[419] *R.V.*, X.17.1,2.

[420] *M.B.H.*, I.66.35; *H.V.*, 545; *Viṣṇu P.*, III.2; *Mārkaṅḍeya P.*, LXXVI.1–42; *Sāmba P.*, 10.17; *Bhaviṣya P.*, I.79.17b; *Skanda P.*, VII.1.2.65.

[421] Sūrya-images with Tāntric influences have been recovered from Nālandā, see, Diwakar, R.R., *Bihar Through the Ages*, p. 363, but no image of the Sun with the female consort is seen. Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 439ff.

[422] Majumdar, R.C., *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, p. 262, 323.

[423] The atmospheric aspect of the Sun was worshipped in the Vedic tradition (See Ch. III) and was continued in the Epics and the Purāṇas also.

Since this fact was known to everyone there was no necessity for the development of the concept of a female principle in Tāntric sense. Secondly, Sun-worship had a moral and ethical base from the very beginning[424] and the impact of Magian tradition[425] accentuated this trait. It is probable that the strict moral sense of the Magianised Sun-cult prevented solar sectarians from developing the concept of a female principle which had resulted into several immoral acts in many quarters in the mediaeval period of India. The adoption of Tāntric practices by the solar sectarians was due to the fact that these practices were in conformity with the Yogic practices which were prevalent in the Sun-cult as early as the Upaniṣads.[426] Thus the Sun-cult in the later Purāṇic world appears to have been influenced by Tāntricism outwardly only. So far as the fundamental concepts are concerned, the Sun-cult kept itself aloof from them. Thus Sun-cult in the later Purāṇas appears to have been influenced by Tāntric symbolism.

Sun-worship was done at sun-rise, at mid-day and at sunset.[427] The later Purāṇas also give an account of the method of performing annual worship (*sāṁvatsarī pūjā*) and annual car-festival (*rathayātrā*) of the Sun with the use of Vedic and Purāṇic *mantras*[428] and methods for the use of incense and other materials in *pūjā*. They describe elaborate methods and results of observing seven different *saptamī-tithis* as well as twelve *śukla-saptamīs*.[429] The legends of Jamadagni and Viśvakarman[430] are also given where an effort has been made to give a national version for covering the feet of the Sun-god. Other topics such as the evolution of the universe according to the principles of Sāṁkhya system[431] are described.

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[424] *R.V.*, X.85.1; I.191.8.9; *T.U.*, I.10.1; *M.B.H.* (Cr.), VII.121.49.

[425] Mithra was a great ethical force. Trever, *History of Ancient Civilization*, vol. II, p. 596 writes, 'Mithraism had a far stronger ethical emphasis and as exclusively a man's religion, was free from the sensual associations of the Oriental religions.'

[426] *Maitrī U.*, 1.2.

[427] *Sāmba P.*, 29.

[428] Ibid., 34.14ff.

[429] Ibid., 46.

[430] Ibid., 45; 12–15.

Centres of Sun-cult in Later Purāṇas:

The later Purāṇas refer to three centres of Sun-worship[432] of Magian type. According to the later Purāṇas the first place is that of Mūlasthāna also referred to as Maitravana[433] on the Candrabhāgā river. It is identified with Multan in Punjab.[434] Besides Mitravana and Mūlasthāna there are other names of this place—Kaśyapapura, Haṁsapura, Bhagapura, Sāmbapura, Prahlādapura and Ādyasthāna—all these terms are connected with Sun-worship.[435] Hiuen-Tsiang who visited this place in the seventh cent. A.D. testifies to its great popularity as a centre of the Sun-cult.[436]

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[431] *Sāmba P.,* 14.

[432] The names of these three places are given differently in different texts. *Skanda P.,* VI.76 refers to Muṇḍīra, Kālapriya and Mūlasthāna, VII.139,11,12a mentions that the Sun is seen at Muṇḍīrasvāmin at Gaṅgāsāgarasaṅgama in morning at mid-day at Kālapriya and in evening at Mūlasthāna near Candrabhāgā. *Sāmba P.,* 26.14 refers to Kālapriya, Sutīra and Mitravana; cf. *Sāmba P.,* 43.36b.—*'Sthāpayitvā raviṁ bhaktyā triḥsthāneṣu surottamāḥ'*; *Bhaviṣya P.,* I.76.4—6 refers to Muṇḍīra, Kālapriya and Mitravana, I.129.16b—17a, Sutīra, Kālapriya and Mitravana, I.189,23.60, Puṇḍīrsvāmin Kālapriya and Mūlasthāna, I.55.27, Suṇḍīrswāmin, Kālapriya and Mitravana; *Varaha P.,* 177.55—77 narrates that Sāmba established three images at Udayācala, Kālapriya and Mūlasthāna.

[433] *Sāmba P.,* I.38.

[434] Cunningham, A., *The Ancient Geography of India,* pp. 194—199. De, N.L., *Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India,* pp. 133-34 see Sircar, D.C., *Geography of Ancient and Mediaeval India.*

[435] Cunningham, A., op cit., p. 196.

[436] Beal, A., *Buddhist Records of Western Countries,* vol. II, p. 274, 'There is a temple dedicated to the Sun very magnificant and profusely decorated. The image of the Sun *deva* is cast in yellow gold and ornamented with rare gems. Its

Many Muslim historians also give an account of this temple.[437] Cunningham takes *Mūla* as an epithet of the Sun as the God of rays and therefore, Mūlasthānapura as the 'City of the Temple of the Sun'.[438] But the interpretation is far-fetched. More probable view appears to be that it means the original place of Sun-worship.[439] The internal evidence is in favour of this interpretation. In the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* as well as in the *Sāmba Purāṇa* this place is also referred to as *Ādyasthāna*[440] which directly means 'original place' and there is no reason to take it as a corruption of Āditya.[441] Secondly, the legend of Sāmba expressly states that for the first time a Sun-temple was established here.[442] That western India where Multan is situated was a strong hold of the Sun-cult, is also attested by epigraphy.[443]

The second place of Sun-worship is referred to as Kālapriya identified with modern Kālpī on the southern bank

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divine insight is mysteriously manifested and its spiritual power made plain to all. Women play their music, light their torches, offer their flowers and perfumes to honour it. This custom has been continued from the very first. The kings and high families of the five Indies never fail to make their offerings of gems and precious stones (to this *deva*). They have founded a house of mercy (happiness) in which they provide food and drink and medicines for the poor and sick, affording succour and sustenance. Men from all countries come here to offer up their prayers. There are always some thousands doing so on the four sides of the temple. There are tanks with flowering groves which one can wander about without restraint.'

[437] Alberuni, Al. Edrisi, Abu Ishak al Ishtakhri etc. refer to it. See, Elliot and Dowson, *History of India as Told by its Own Historians,* vol. I, pp. 18–73.

[438] Cunningham, A., op. cit., p. 197.

[439] Hazra, *Studies* vol. I, p. 39.

[440] Ibid., p. 105.

[441] Cunningham, A., op. cit., p. 198.

[442] *Sāmba P.,* ch. 24–26.

[443] Sankalia, H.D., *Archaeology of Gujarat,* pp. 60, 80, 137, 212. Fleet, *C.I.I.,* vol. III, pp. 70, 80, 162, 218.

of Yamunā.[444] There is a controversy regarding the identification of Kālapriya-temple of the Sun at Kālpī with Kālapriyanātha at whose fairs all the three plays of Bhavabhūti were staged[445] but others identify Kālapriya with Mahākāla of Ujjayinī.[446] It is reasonable to suspend judgment on this issue.

The third place is referred to as Sutīra, or Muṅḍīra or Udayācala also known as Sūryakānana, Ravikṣetra, Sūryakṣetra and Mitravana[447] while the *Brahma Purāṇa* expressly calls it Koṇāditya or Koṇārka in Utkala (Odradeśa).[448] It is generally identified with modern Koṇārka near Purī in Orissa.[449] Kane objects to this identification. He identifies Muṅḍīra with the Sun-temple at Modhera in north Gujarat. But the identification of the third place with Koṇārka appears to be reasonable one in view of internal evidence.[450] It seems that the name Koṇārka came to be applied to this place because of its position in the north-east corner (*Koṇa*) with respect to Puri.[451]

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[444] Mirashi, V.V., Three Ancient Famous Temples of the Sun. *Purāṇa,* vol. VIII, No. 1, p. 42.

[445] Mirashi, V.V., Identification of Kālapriya, *Studies in Indology,* vol. I, p. 33. Altekar. A.S., *Rāṣṭrakūṭas and their times,* p. 102, identifies Kālapriya with Kālpī.

[446] Kane, P.V., (Ed.) *Uttararāmacarita* (4th Ed.) (Intro.), Tripurāri, A Commentator of Bhavabhūti's *Mālatīmādhava* identifies both. Bhandarkar, D.R., *E.I.,* vol. VII, p. 30.

[447] *Sāmba P.,* 42.2.

[448] *Brahma P.,* 28—32, Hazra, *Studies,* vol. I, p. 106. Though 'Koṇārka' does not occur in the *Bhaviṣya P.,* yet the Sun is called 'Koṇa-Vallabha in *Bhaviṣya P.,* I.153.50. In *Kapil Saṁhitā,* A.S.B. Ms. No. 311, Ch. 6, Koṇārka has been called Maitreyavana and Ravikṣetra.

[449] Hazra, *Studies,* vol. I, p. 146. Mirashi, V.V., Three Ancient Famous Temples of the Sun. *Purāṇa,* vol. VIII, No. 1, p. 41.

[450] *Sāmba P.,* 43.1 expressly states that the beautiful penance forest of the Sun was situated on the shore of the salt-ocean and the Sun's image which was established there by Manus was given a name-Muṅḍīra.

[451] Kane, P.V. (Ed.) *Uttararāmacarita* of Bhavabhūti, fourth ed., Intro., p. 13.

It is clear from the above description of the places of Sun-worship that the whole of northern India was witnessing the development of the Magian type of the Sun-cult. The re-casting of the *Sāmba Purāṇa* and addition of chapters in it shows the extention of the Sun-cult towards eastern India.[452]

Syncretism in The Later Purāṇas:

The religious syncretism attains climax in the later Purāṇic world. The *Pañcāyatana Pūjā* represents this climax.[453] The spirit of rapproachment among different sectarian deities is visible in the *Sāmba Purāṇa* where it is said that the Sun was worshipped as Viṣṇu in Śvetadvīpa, as Māheśvara in Kuśa-dvīpa, as Brahmā in Puṣkara-dvīpa and as Bhāskara in Śākadvīpa.[454] The Ms. *Puṣkara-Māhātmya* of the *Padma Purāṇa* reveals the compromising spirit between the sects of Sūrya and Brahmā.[455] This trend of rapproachment between different sects is best illustrated by the syncretic images of the Sun.[456] The cult-syncretism in the later Purāṇic world is attested by early mediaeval inscriptions of the Pratihāra, Pāla, Chauhān and many other Rājput kings who patronized more than one deity and the same at one time.[457]

Thus the Purāṇas-early and late, contain valuable data for the study of the Sun and solar cult from the beginning of the Christian era, if not earlier, to the end of the Hindu period of India. The early Purāṇic records continue the national tradition of simple, non-sectarian Sun-worship by means of symbols though there are passages and occasions when solar sectarianism in a veiled form is seen. The old Vedic tradition of worshipping the atmospheric Sun under different names continued though Sūrya, Savitri and Āditya were given human personalities also. The Sun was worshipped mainly in his benevolent form. The early Purāṇas describe about the family of the Sun-god and his chariot with elaborateness not seen before. There are indirect references to Sun-images and temples, but the early Purāṇas do not mention the Magas—the foreign Sun-worshipping priests. There is mention of the characteristics of the Sun-images which are Indian as compared to the Irānian elements of the later Purāṇas. In various domestic rites Sun-worship played predominant part and the twelve petalled lotus was particularly associated with the Sun-god. The worship of the Sun in the early Purāṇas mainly consisted of recitation of the *mantras*—Vedic and Purāṇic, in praise of the Sun-god under the names of Bhāskara, Ravi, Sūrya, Savitri, Bhaga, Arka, etc; *arghya* consisting of water, sandal, flowers, specially red; and salutation to the Sun-god. There is no reference to the Tāntric mode in Sun-worship of the early Purāṇas.

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[452] Hazra, *Studies*, vol. I, p. 62 suggests that the present *Sāmba Purāṇa* was composed in Orissa.

[453] For details see Banerjea, J.N., *Pañcopāsanā* (Bengali), Calcutta, 1950.

[454] *Sāmba P.*, 26; 37; 38.

[455] For details see—A. Chatterjee, *Padma-Purāṇa—A Study*, pp. 193-94.. The *Śāradātilakaṁ*, XIV.4.2, emphasises the syncretic character of the worship of the Sun.

[456] Banerjea, J.N., *D.H.I.*, p. 551.

[457] See Appendix 'A'.

The most interesting feature in the late Purāṇic records is the mention of the advent of the Magas and the popularisation of the Sun-images and temples at three places. The Sun-images were to be dressed according to the Irānian fashion though there is an effort in these Purāṇas to nationalise these foreign elements. The advent of the Magas gave a fillip to the cause of the Sun-worshippers and it spread throughout northern India. Ultimately the national and Irānian traditions of Sun-worship were mixed up and the solar sectarians developed a philosophy which was similar to the Sāṁkhya system. In earlier chapters of the later Purāṇas the Vedas and the Purāṇas are given prominence while in the later chapters of the later Purāṇas Tāntric symbolism gains popularity.

CHAPTER VI

ART GALLERIES

It is generally agreed that religion had been the motive force behind the evolution of art all over the world.[1] Art is largely inspired by religion which furnishes its purpose, determines its form and provides its symbolical significance. It has rightly been pointed out[2] that 'art and religion belong together by identities of origin, subject-matter, and inner experience. The experience of faith and the experience of beauty are in some measure identical'.

The close proximity of religion and art is particularly true in the case of ancient India[3] where religion pervaded every sphere of life. In view of the role of religion as the guide, friend and philosopher of ancient Indian art, the study of art for the history of religious ideas, cults and creeds cannot be overemphasised.[4] The artistic pieces supply us with positive data for the true evaluation of religious ideas and practices.[5] The study of the Sun-cult would remain incom-

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1. Grünwedel, *Buddhist Art in India,* has hit the point when he says that 'the most important basis for the development of an independent art among any people lies in its religion'. See, Della Setta, *Religion and Art.*
2. Ogden Vogt, *Art and Religion,* p. 19.
3. Grünwedel, op. cit., p. 1 has rightly observed that 'the religious character, so deeply rooted in the national life of the Indian races has also continued the guiding principle in their art'. Similarly V. A. Smith, *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon,* p. 8 has opined that Indian art, on the whole, is the slave of religious tradition. cf. Foucher, A., *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art;* Dubreuil, G.S. *Iconography of South India,* pp. 4-5.
4. Bhattacharya, B.C., *Indian Images,* p. V, writes 'The study of religion cannot proceed to any extent without a study of Iconography, particularly in India where Image-worship forms the very pivot of the popular religion'.
5. Banerjea, J.N., *D.H.I.,* pp. 3–6.

plete in the absence of descriptions of art-representations of the Sun-god. The various ideas, tendencies and practices of the Sun-cult discussed in the preceding chapters may find confirmation and corroboration in the art-traditions of India and may be easily understandable in the light of the sunny beams that come from the art galleries of India.

Solar Symbols on Coins:

On the basis of literary references[6] and actual specimens of solar representations[7] it may be safely concluded that the representation of the Sun-god in human form was preceded by symbolical representations on coins and seals.[8] There is no reference to any image of the Sun in the *Rigveda* and the later Vedic texts.[9] On the other hand there are direct references to the symbolical depiction of the Sun-god in the Brāhmaṇas.[10] In the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* there is complete humanisation of the Sun but there is no evidence in these texts for the iconic tradition of the Sun.[11] In the Sūtras[12] there are indications for the prevalence of the general tradition of icons but references to Sun-images are conspicuous by their absence. In the early Purāṇic texts[13] there are no direct references to the image of the Sun. The symbolical representations of the Sun-god are prominently mentioned in these works. It is only from the 5th cent. A.D. onwards that we start getting references to the regular image of the Sun.[14] This fact is directly expressed in the *Sāmba Purāṇa* where it is stated[15] that in ancient times there was no image of the Sun. The Sun worshipped by his devotees in early days was circular just as there is the disc in the sky. In view of these references it is natural to find only symbolical representations of the Suṇ-god on coins, seals, paintings etc. before the evolution of regular image of the Sun-god. It has already been shown in chapter II that there had been many symbolical representations of the Sun on prehistoric paintings, and protohistoric seals and potteries. This tradition of symbolical depiction of the Sun-god appears to have been continued on early coins and seals of India. A brief review of these symbolical representations on early coins and seals is desirable for a proper understanding of the evolution of regular image of the Sun as the origins of many trends and tendencies of solar iconography may be traced in these symbols (*Vimba* or *Pratikriti*).[16]

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[6] *Sāmba P.*, 29.2—6. In the legend of Satrājit (*Viṣṇu P.*, IV.13.12—15) the Sun-god appeared at first as a fireball and later on displayed his human form. Similarly to Aditi (*Mārkaṇḍeya P.* 105.1—3) the Sun appeared at first in his natural form and it is only in later instance that he showed his human form.

[7] No human representation of the Sun-god in India of a date earlier than the Mauryan period has been traced so far (see *J.I.S.O.A.*, III, No. 2, p. 125), while symbolical representations of the Sun-god have been discovered on prehistoric and protohistoric objects, See chapter II.

[8] *J.I.S.O.A.*, XVI. p. 51.

[9] See Chapter III.

[10] S.B., VII.4.1.10, *P.B.*, XVIII.9.9.

[11] Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 85.

[12] *P.G.S.*, III.14.8. See, Apte, V.M., *Social and Religious Life in the Grihyasūtras*, p. 234.

[13] Srivastava, V.C., The Purāṇic Records on the Sun-worship, *Purāṇa*, XI, No. 2, pp. 235—41.

In the light of the Vedic, Epic and Purāṇic descriptions of the Sun and his attributes certain symbols and designs may be specially associated with Sūrya. The wheel, the lotus, the rayed disc, the Svastika, the six armed device and the so-called taurine symbols may well be accepted as representing the Sun-god. The Svastika, the wheel and various other manifestations of it rest upon the primitive concept of solar motions.[17] The lotus is the representative of the fructifying aspect of the Sun.[18] The six armed symbol may stand for the Sun in his capacity as the maker of six seasons.[19] The taurine symbol also stands for the Sun-god.[20]

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[14] We get references to Sun-images in a few late passages of the *Matsya Purāṇa* which have been dated in the 5th-6th cent. A.D. The *Sāmba Purāṇa* whose earliest portions have been dated as early as 500 A.D. mentions about the Sun-icons. See, *Purāṇa*, XI, No. 2, p. 241, fn. 99 and p. 246, fn. 136.

[15] *Sāmba P.*, 29.2—*na purā pratimā hy āsīt pūjyate maṅḍale raviḥ.*

[16] *J.I.S.O.A.*, XVI, pp. 51—53.

[17] Dumont, P.E., Aja-Ekapāda, *J.A.O.S.*, vol. 53, pp. 326—34.

The rayed disc is the most direct representation of the Sun. Such rayed discs are found depicted on early as well as late types of the Magadha series of punch-marked coins.[21] Broadly speaking there are four varieties of rayed discs as depicted on the punch-marked coins[22] (Pl. 2a). This symbol is depicted in such a naturalistic way that nobody can mistake it for anything else than the Sun. This device loses popularity in the Maurya-Śuṅga period as it is repeated less frequently on the coins of this age than on those of earlier (Imperial) series.[23] The symbol of rayed disc appears to have been prevalent throughout India as such coins have been discovered from all over India. The Sun in its natural form is found depicted on the silver punch-marked coins (Pāṅḍya) of South India also.[24] A few round copper cast coins of Kāḍa (Pl. 2b) (3rd cent. B.C.) bear on one of their sides a large flamed disc which may rightly be taken as the Sun.[25] The Sun and the Moon in their natural form are depicted on the coins of Western Kṣatrapas[26] (Pl. 2c). On the Toramāṇa coins also the Sun is depicted in its natural form[27] (Pl. 2d). These rayed discs on early coins of India served as the symbols of the Sun-god. In the Purāṇas it is specifically said that the Sun was worshipped in earlier times in the form of a circle as it stood in the sky.[28] In the Brāhmaṇic rituals the disc of gold or a fire-brand was employed as a symbol of the Sun-god.[29]

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[18] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 109. See, Gonda, J., *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism*.

[19] *Viṣṇu P.*, II.8.4 refers to six spokes in the Sun's chariot as six seasons.

[20] Banerjea, J.N., The Representation of Sūrya in Brāhmaṇical Art, *I.A.*, 1925, p. 162, Fabri, C.L., *J.R.A.S.*, 1935, p. 314.

[21] Gupta, P.L., *Coins*, pl. I & II, figs. 15–25.

[22] Allan, *B.M.C.*, p. II. pl. XXXVII, XLII-7, VI-25.

[23] Gupta, *Coins*, p. 187.

[24] Ibid., Pl. XII, p. 116.

[25] Allan, *B.M.C.*, pl. XCII, p. 145.

[26] Gupta, *Coins*, pl. XIII, fig. 134.

[27] Ibid., pl. XVI, fig. 168.

More interesting and significant is the rayed disc-device as depicted on the tribal coins of Pañcāla-Mitra series (200 B.C.—100 B.C.). The coins of Sūryamitra and Bhānumitra in Pañcāla-Mitra series contain interesting devices on their reverse which have important bearing on the history of Solar cult in ancient India. The device on the reverse of a coin of Sūryamitra[30] (Pl. 3a) contains a railing with a post at each end and there is a Sun between posts while on another coin[31] of the same kind besides these there is an additional depiction of a triangular-headed symbol below the radiate ball and the whole is placed on a platform between two pillars with cross bars. Similarly the device on a coin of Bhānumitra[32] (Pl. 3b) represents a solar disc surrounded by eight pellets on a railing with a post at each end, flanked by taurines. Here the triangular figure is absent. There is another coin of Bhānumitra[33] (Pl. 3c) which contains on reverse a five pointed flame rising from a *nandipada* symbol. With the exception of the last mentioned coin-device the coin symbols on the remaining coins of Sūryamitra-Bhānumitra have been unanimously taken as representing the Sun-god as a rayed disc enshrined as an object of worship.[34] There cannot be any doubt to this interpretation in view of the facts that there are direct and visible representation of solar disc on these coins and the names of the issuers of these coins are directly connected with the Sun-cult.[35] Taurines found on Bhānumitra's coin are again indicative of solar symbolism.[36]

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[28] *Sāmba P.*, 29.2—*yathaitan maṅḍalaṁ vyomni sthīyate savitus tadā.*

[29] *S.B.*, VII.4.1.10, III.9.2.9. cf. Haradatta on *Āp. D.S.*, II.11.29.

[30] *I.M.C.*, I, p. 188, No. 2.

[31] Ibid., p. 188, No. 3; *B.M.C.*, pp. CXVIII, 193.

[32] *I.M.C.*, I, pl. XXII, no. 4.

[33] Ibid., pl. XXII, No. 5.

[34] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 138; Smith, *I.M.C.*, I, p. 185; Allan, *B.M.C.*, p. 193.

The solar device on these coins have got a peculiarity in the sense that it is intimately connected with fire. It is well known that the symbolic worship of the Sun-god was prevalent in later Vedic age[37] as well as in early Mithraism.[38] Whether the device was a continuation of the Brāhmaṇic tradition or it was a derivation from early Mithraic tradition that is a question which has not been answered satisfactorily and needs thoughtful attention. J. N. Banerjea[39] suggested long ago that this provides us with 'an unmistakable evidence of the Brāhmaṇic symbol for the Sun used in sacrificial rites as a regular object of worship'. Secondly, the triangular-headed symbol of Sūryamitra's coins has been taken by him as representing 'a summary representation of the fire-altar' because according to him the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[40] tells us that in piling the fire-altar a disc of gold was placed on it to represent the Sun. Both these suggestions need investigation.

No doubt, there was provision for symbolical worship of the Sun-god by means of such symbols as wheel, Svastika, firebrand and goldplate in the Brāhmaṇas[41] and in many Sun-sacrifices these symbols were employed to worship the Sun-god[42] but it was just a minor part of the elaborate ritual and not the whole ritual. Moreover the intimate association of the Fire and the Sun as it is found in these coins was never emphasised by these ritualists as a whole.[43] In these coins the Sun-god has been given a prominence which is uncalled for in the case of a Brāhmaṇic ritual centering round the Fire.[44]

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[35] Majumdar, R.C. (ed), *A.I.U.*, p. 172. Sūrya, Bhānu and Mitra are names of the Sun-god.

[36] Banerjea, J.N., 'The representation of Sūrya in Brāhmaṇical Art', *I.A.* 1925, p. 162, fn. 6; Fabri, C.L., *J.R.A.S.*, 1932, p. 314.

[37] Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 155.

[38] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 438.

[39] Ibid., p. 139.

[40] *S.B.*, VII.4.1.10.

[41] Ibid., III.9.2.9, VII.4.1.10; cf. *R.V.*, I. 175.4, IV.30.14. V.29.10.

[42] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, pp. 61, 318, 347, 351.

As regards the second suggestion, it may be said that it is highly untenable. The evidence of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* has been misunderstood[45] in the sense that in piling the fire-altar the disc of gold is not placed on the fire-altar but is actually placed in the first layer over which there are provisions for four more layers.[46] Thus there was no provision for its placing on the fire-altar and it was never visible. Moreover, the *Agnicayana* was such an unusual sacrifice[47] that it could not have such popular representation as is envisaged by these coins. Further, the gold disc was employed in the *Agnicayana* only as a part of the cosmic sacrifice which it represents and not as an evidence of separate solar worship.[48] Thus the triangular symbol may not have been a summary representation of the fire-altar because of difference in shape and form as well as in ideal.

These solar symbols appear to be derivations either physical or ideological from the traditions of early Mithraism. Firstly, in Mithraism the combined worship of the Fire and the Sun is a prominent feature.[49] In these coins the Fire and the Sun are intimately connected if the triangular symbol is taken as a fire and in other cases the railing with two posts on each side may be taken as vases containing fire. These are a few examples of such fire in vases along with Sun-disc and other figures such as on the royal tomb of Darius.[50] Here on a pedestal stands the king adoring Ahurmazdah. Facing the monarch, there is the sacred fire burning in the vase and the Sun shining high up behind the divine figure. There was a tradition of representing Mithra, the Sun-god, by means of symbols as a solar disc, a wheel etc. in early Mithraism. For example, in one of the sepulchres of Darius near Naqsh-i-Rustam Mithra is represented as a round disc.[51] Anthropomorphic representation of Mithra was resorted to only after the Hellenisation of Mithraism in the courts of West Asian successors of Alexander[52] by the 1st century B.C.

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[43] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, pp. 313–378.

[44] Ibid.

[45] *S.B.*, VII.4.1.10–*Atha rukmamupadadhāti aso va Āditya eva rukma.*

[46] Ibid., *T.S.*, IV.2.8; *V.S.*, XIII.3; *T.S.B.*, 2.7.1; *K.S.B.*, XX.5; *M.S.B.*, III.2.6; *Baud.S.S.*, X.30; *Ap.S.S.*, XVI.22.2; *Vaik.S.S.*, IX/XVIII.17; *Sat.S.S.*, XI.7.20; *Kat.S.S.*, XVII.74; Sharma, G.R., *The Excavations at Kauśāmbī*, p. 161ff.

[47] Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, p. 354.

[48] Sharma, G.R., op. cit., pp. 134–136; Kane, P.V., *H.D.S.*, vol. II, pp. 1246–1247.

[49] Moulton, J.H., *Early Zoroastrianism*, pp. 182 ff; Cumont, F., *The Mysteries of Mithra*, p. 33ff.

The tradition of a fire-altar with the solar disc placed above is found depicted on a few seals of the Gupta period from Basārh[53] Bhītā,[54] Sunet,[55] and Rājghāt[56]. This association of the Fire and the Sun has been taken by all authorities as representing the Irānian tradition of Sun-worship.[57] It is not an example of Brāhmanic Sun-symbol. Banerjea[58] himself admitted that there is justification for taking them to be due to Irānian influence. It is difficult to explain as to how the same device has been taken by Banerjea as representing two different traditions particularly when the Brāhmaṇic tradition[59] was continuing in the time of second examples noted above. No doubt there is a gap of time between these two examples and probably it was this factor which led Banerjea to hold the view that the solar disc on the fire in Mitra-coins was due to Brāhmaṇic tradition as there was no Irānian tradition by the time and the same device on Gupta seals was due to Irānian influence because by this time Irānian Maga tradition was available in India according to Banerjea.[60] It may be pointed out that there is a strong probability that the Magas and Magian tradition of Sun-worship came into India in the wake of Achaemenian invasion of north-western India in about the 5th century B.C.[61] The Magian tradition of Sun-worship must have been available to Sun-worshippers in India from the 5th century B.C. onwards. Therefore, it should not be surprising if an example of a Sun-disc on the fire in imitation of Mithraic tradition is found on coins of Sun-worshippers of 2nd-1st centuries B.C.[62] It is also significant to note that the fire-altar occurs on a few earlier Kuṣāṇa coins as on those of Wema Kadphises.[63] There cannot be any doubt that the fire-altar on Kuṣāṇa coins was due to non-Indian influences. The coins of Wema Kadphises are either contemporary or younger contemporary of the Mitra-coins. This shows that Irāṇian Sun-fire cult was influencing the coin-device of the 1st century B.C. of the earlier Kuṣāṇas in its symbolical representations. No anthropomorphic representation of the Sun-god has been adopted on the early Kuṣāṇa coins.[64] It is probable that the device of the Sun-disc with fire on Pañcāla-Mitra coins and the device on early Kuṣāṇa coins may belong to the same tradition i.e. the Irānian Fire Sun-worshipping Magian tradition.[65] The device on Gupta seals may be a continuation of this tradition which is first seen in the Pañcāla-Mitra coins. That the Mithraic tradition of Sun-worship was influencing the device of local coins may also be seen from the fact that there is something Mithraic in the attitude of a human figure worshipping before fire and mountain with sunrise on a local coin of Vaṭāśvaka.[66]

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[50] Jackson, A.V., William, *Persia, Past and Present*, pp. 296--300; Dhalla, M.N., *Zoroastrian Civilization*, pp. 255–56.

[51] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 438.

[52] Ibid.

[53] *A.S.I.A.R.*, 1913-14, pp. 118–120, 140, pl. XLIX.

[54] Ibid., 1911-1912, p. 58, No. 98.

[55] *J.R.A.S.*, 1901, p. 98.

[56] *J.N.S.I.*, XIX, pt. II, pp. 176–178.

[57] Spooner, Rapson and Marshall who discovered these seals agreed that the Sun-disc on the fire-altar was Irānian in inspiration.

[58] *D.H.I.*, pp. 198-99.

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[59] Symbolical worship of the Sun-god is well attested by early Purāṇas which shows that the tradition of symbolical Sun-worship continued even during the Gupta period when these seals were issued, cf. Roy, S.N., *Paurāṇic Dharma evaṁ Samāja,* pp. 56–60.

[60] Banerjea, *D.H.I.,* p. 430.

[61] Sankalia, H.D., *Archaeology of Gujarat,* p. 212; Chattopadhyaya, S., *Achaemendis in India,* pp. 22-23, 48; Srivastava, V.C., 'The Magas and the Sun-worship', paper read at the *All India Oriental Conference,* Aligarh, 1966 and 'Antiquity of Magas in Ancient India', *P.I.H.C.,* Bhagalpur, 1968, pp. 86–94. Actual specimens of fire-altars of Achaemenid period have been found from Pakistan. See, Dani, A.D., *Ancient Pakistan,* vol. III.

[62] Allan, op. cit., p. 193.

[63] Banerjea, *D.H.I.,* p. 198.

A comparison of the reverse of the two coins of Bhānumitra noted above will reveal that the king used Sun-disc on one coin with probably the fire in a vase while in the other coin he uses five flamed fire with no Sun and from this the inference may be drawn that the religious consciousness of the king never found any break between the Sun and the Fire and he probably regarded both as symbols of one and the same cult.

The name of the kings of this dynasty is also revealing. They all end in *'Mitra'* and many of them have first part signifying Sun-god. This emphasis on *'Mitra'* may also be taken as demonstrating the Irānian influence over the whole dynasty. In south-east Asia[67] kings used to give their own names to the *Śivaliṅga* which they used to establish. Here the process in the case of Pañcāla-Mitra kings appears to be reverse in the sense that they have adopted names signifying their faith.

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[64] The earliest anthropomorphic representation of Mithra in India is found on the coins of Kaniṣka. See, Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 140.

[65] Majumdar, *A.I.U.*, p. 172.

[66] Allan, op. cit., XXLVI.

[67] Majumdar, R.C., *Hindu Colonies in the Far East*, p. 167.

This solar device on Pañcāla-Mitra coins appears to be due to Irānian Mithraic influence and is not an example of Brāhmaṇic symbol for Sun-worship. The triangular object is not a summary representation of the *Agnicayana* but is simply a flamed fire or a fire-altar of the Persian tradition. The railing with two posts on sides may be taken as a vase with design. The whole device is a reminiscence of the early Mithraic representation of the Mithra by similar devices as seen on the tombs of Darius and other art examples of early Mithraism. This interpretation has got a far reaching effect on the history of the Sun-cult in ancient India as it may show influence of early Mithraism in the heart of India at such an early stage. This has a bearing on the antiquity of Maga advent in India. This has also its effect upon the nature of Mitra dynasties so prominently found at one stage of ancient Indian history.

The wheel and its variants are the commonest symbols found on the early single type silver coins[68] as well as on early punchmarked coins[69] (Pl. 3d) of India. Foucher[70] and others[71] connect them with many forms of the *Dharmacakra* symbol while Durga Prasad[72] takes these symbols as of

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[68] Allan, *B.M.C.*, pt. I, Class I, p. XV, 1–3, pl. V, Fig. 1.

[69] Ibid., Pt. II, p. XXII. Four methods of representing it are found: Pl.X-17, pl. X-8, pl. VIII-1, pl. VI-25; on reverse also two varieties of the Sun-symbols are found, pl. XXXVII, XLII-7, pl. VI-25; on punchmarked copper coins also the device appears, Pl. LXXVII. Smith, *I.M.C.*, vol. I, p. 132. Many varieties of wheel device are the most common of all and are seldom absent. cf. Durga Prasad, Classification and Significance of the Symbols on the Silver Punchmarked coins of Ancient India, *J.A.S.B.* (New series), vol. XXX, No. 3, Numismatic Supplement, No. XLV.

[70] Foucher, op. cit., pp. 14, 73, 248, fn. 2.

[71] Cunningham, *C.A.I.*, p. 58.

[72] *J.A.S.B.*, vol. XXX, No. 3.

Tāntric significance. Spooner[73] long ago suggested that many of these symbols were solar in nature and the association of rayed disc with the fire-altar leads him to believe that they were of Zoroastrian affiliation. J. N. Banerjea accepts the first part of his thesis but differs from him as regards the later part of thesis because he feels that these solar symbols were of indigenous Brāhmaṇic tradition.[74] Some of these coins with solar symbols may be pre-Buddhistic in date.[75] It is well known that the wheel and other solar symbols appear on the proto-historic seals and potteries also. In the Vedic and Epic-Purāṇa traditions the wheel is directly connected with the Sun. Moreover, in solar iconography the wheel played a conspicuous part in later times. It is also significant to note that the wheel is rarely represented in the imperial type of Magadha punchmarked coins where we find direct representation of the Sun.[76] In view of all these evidences it is not unfair to associate the wheel and its numerous variants on the early coins of India with the Sun-cult. On some later coins also the wheel is found represented. For instance, an elaborate wheel appears on the reverse of the unique silver coin of the Vriṣṇi-Rajanya *gaṇa*.[77] It has been described by many as *Dharmacakra*[78] but it may not be Buddhistic but Vaiṣṇavite and ultimately solar[79] because the device appears on a coin of a clan-Vrṣṇi-Rajanya (Pl. 3e) which is associated with Vāsudeva-Kriṣṇa in the Epic and Purāṇic traditions. The *Cakra* may stand for the *Sudarśana-cakra* of Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu. The basic idea underlying the wheel in its association with Vāsudeva is solar and the wheel as a symbol par-excellence of the god is undoubtedly one of the tangible signs of his connection with the Vedic

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[73] *J.R.A.S.*, 1915, p. 412.

[74] *J.I.S.O.A.*, XVI, p. 52.

[75] Cunningham, *C.A.I.*, p. 43 opines that the punchmarked coins may be as early as 1000 B.C.

[76] Gupta, *Coins*, pp. 186-87.

[77] Cunningham, *C.A.I.*, pp. 70. IV-15.

[78] Allan. *B.M.C.*, p. CLV.

[79] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 131.

Viṣṇu who represents the motion-aspect of the Sun.[80] The wheel surrounded by a circle of dots which appears on the obverse of the Kulūta chief-Vīrayaśas (100 A.D.) (Pl. 3f) may also admit of this interpretation.[81] The close association of the Kulūtas with Varāhamihira[82]—a Sun-worshipper, gives additional weight to the suggestion. A variant of the same *Cakra* appears on the reverse of the copper coins of Acyuta[83] (4th century A.D.). It is noteworthy that Acyuta is one of the twenty four names of Para Vāsudeva—the wielder of the *Sudarśanacakra.*[84] The wheel is represented on the local coins of Taxila; on those of the Audumbaras and many other such coins also.

On some of the earliest coins in the punchmarked series[85] (Pl. 4a) and on a local coin of Eran (Pl. 4b) (dated as early as the third century B.C.)[86] the figure of the lotus is frequently found. The device is continued to be represented on later punchmarked coins of Magadha[87] (Pl. 4c). The lotus was very intimately connected with the Sun from ancient times. It played a conspicuous part in the mythology of Brāhmaṇism and its association with the Sun is fully borne out by the evidence of the Purāṇas[88] and later literature.[89] In solar iconography the lotus continued to be represented and its importance may be realised from the fact that detailed instructions are given in texts for its representation.[90]

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[80] Gonda, *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism,* p. 97 believes in the identification of *Cakrasudarśana* with the Sun-disc. cf. *R.V.,* V.63.4.

[81] Allan, *B.M.C.,* p. C takes it as a *Dharmacakra* while Banerjea, *D.H.I.,* p. 109 regards it as a solar symbol.

[82] *Mudrārākṣasa* (ed. Kale), p. 34; *Brihat-Saṁhitā,* XIV-22, XIV.29.

[83] Allan, *B.M.C.,* p. LXXIX, 117–19.

[84] Banerjea, *D.H.I.,* p. 109. The device of *Cakra* appears on a few pre-historic rock cave paintings. See, Datta, A.N., *A Few Pre-historic Reliefs and the Rock Paintings of the Singapur, Raigarh State* (C.P.), India, p. XV–XIX.

[85] Durga Prasad, op. cit., pl. I.2.LA2, III.10.LC2, pp. 23–145.

[86] Allan, *B.M.C.,* pp. 141–43, Nos. 5, 6, 16–25.

[87] Gupta, *Coins,* p. 187, pl. II.29.

[88] *Matsya P.,* chs. 74–80; Gonda, J., op. cit., pp. 103-104. In the Brāhmaṇas the Aśvins are described as lotus-wreathed. See Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia,* vol. I.

The six-armed symbol which is characteristically found on the punchmarked coins (Pl. 4d) as well as on the local coins (Pl. 4e) of India may also be regarded as a fiting representative of the Sun. The Sun's wheel has been described in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* as containing six spokes as symbols of the six seasons.[91] The so-called taurine symbol so frequently found on the punchmarked coins as well as on later coins (Pl. 4f) of India has been taken by Banerjea[92] as symbolising the Sun and the Moon represented together, the disc symbolising the former, the latter being symbolised by the crescent attached to it.

There are two groups of symbols—one on a Vaṭāśvaka coin and the other on a few Avanti coins which need special attention. The Vaṭāśvaka coin type (Pl. 5a) contains a figure to the left with raised hand in front of the mountain, below the mountain there is a pile of balls and below the figure there is a taurine symbol. It was admitted by Allan that there is something Mithraic[93] about the attitude of the figure apparently worshipping, though he himself objects to this on the ground that the symbols are not intended to form one type.[94] The objection of Allan is not based upon any substantial ground. In view of the fact that there is a great probability for the presence of Magian element in the north-western India as early as the Achaemenid period it is not surprising to find Mithraic motifs on coins and those too of north-western tribes. The Vaṭāśvaka coins where this device occurs are attributed to Assakenoi,[95] who inhabited the north-western regions of India—those very regions which formed part of the Achaemenid empire in India. It may be further seen that on the present coin the device appears to be of one type because in other coins[96] where these three elements—figure, mountain with ball and taurine are found the distance is quite marked, while on the present coin the three elements are quite close as to form one type.

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[89] Hemādri in his *Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi* (*Vratakhaṅḍa*), pt. II, pp. 528—33, 536-37 ff. says (p. 553) *'upalipya śucau deśe sūryaṁ tatra samarcayet saṁlikhet tatra padmantu dvādaśāraṁ sakarṇikam'*.

[90] *Viṣṇudh P.*, III.45.1—8.

[91] *Viṣṇu P.*, II.8.4.—*trinābhimati pañcāre ṣaṅneminyakṣayātmake/ saṁvatsaramaye kritasnaṁ kālacakraṁ prathiṣthatam//*

[92] The Representation of Sūrya in Brāhmaṇical Art, *I.A.*, 1925, p. 162.

[93] In the *Avesta* Mithra is said to appear before sun-rise on the rocky summits of the mountain. See, Frank cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*, p. 2.

The above survey will leave no room for doubt that the Sun-god came to be represented by various symbols such as the wheel, rayed disc, lotus, six-armed symbol and taurine. There is no anthropomorphic representation of the Sun-god on these early coins. These symbols were of indigenous as well as of Mithraic traditions also. In view of the fact that in India and Irān both Sūrya and Mithra respectively were represented in earlier times in symbolic form it is difficult to say categorically whether the rayed disc on these coins are survivals of the indigenous tradition or the device is simply an adaptation of the Mithraic tradition.

It is repeatedly said that the anthropomorphic representation of the Sun-god has not been found on early indigenous coins of India and such representation is met with on certain coins of foreigners like the Indo-Greeks and the Kuṣāṇas.[97] From this point of view a coin-device on a few

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[94] Allan, *B.M.C.*, p. XXLVI. In the *Sāmba Purāṇa* (51B—53) also the Magian form of Sun-worship has been specially associated with the mountains. cf. Hazra, R.C., *Studies in the Upa-Purāṇas*, vol. I.

[95] *A.I.U.*, p. 45.

[96] It is found on Taxila coins. cf. Allan, op. cit., p. 221.

[97] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 139.

Avanti coins[98] (Pl. 5b) is worthy of special investigation. The description of the symbols are as follows[99]:—

On Obverse:—A human figure standing, facing, clad in short tailed coat and high tiara; above; Svastika and taurine; to right—solar symbol composed of crescents and broad arrow-heads attached to central boss; to left—standard surmounted by rayed Sun; on extreme left—the tree.

On Reverse:—Ujjain-symbol with an inner circle and dot in each orb.

There are certain peculiarities in this group of solar symbols which may be noted as follows: Firstly, here the solar symbols are found in association with a human figure. This figure is not found on other coins,[100] though solar symbol is depicted on many coins front this place[101] as well as from elsewhere.[102] Secondly, nowhere the solar symbol is found attached to a standard, though Garuḍa-standards are found on many other coins such as on those of the Guptas.[103] It is to be noted that somewhat similar symbols are found on a few coins from Eran-Ujjain.[104] But on these coins the staff is surmounted by a taurine symbol and not by a rayed Sun though human figure with circle surrounded by six symbols and on reverse Svastika etc. are found. In view of the fact that the taurine symbol is taken as a solar symbol the evidence of these coins of Eran-Ujjain may simply strengthen the suggestion that the region of Avanti was a stronghold of sectarian Sun-cult.

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[98] Srivastava, V.C., The Religious Study of a Symbol on an Avantī Coin, *Memoirs,* No. 2, *B.H.U.,* pp. 133—36.

[99] Smith, *I.M.C.,* vol. I, p. 153, pl. XX—2. cf. p. 153. II type, 13,14,15.

[100] A perusal of local coins from Kauśāmbī, Ayodhya, Avanti and Taxila etc. will bear out the truth of it. cf. Cunningham, op. cit.; Smith, op. cit., pp. 148—159; Allan, *B.M.C.,* pp. LXXIX—CLXVI.

[101] The solar symbols occur on many local coins of this place. cf. Smith, *I.M.C.,* vol. I, pp. 148—59; Diskalkar, D.B., Sixteen Ancient Copper Coins from Malwa, *J.N.S.I.,* X, pt. I, pp. 38—42. Treveda, H.V., Some Ancient Coins from Ujjain, *J.N.S.I.,* XVI, pt. II, pp. 130—135. Gupta, P.L., Some Interesting Coins from Ujjain-Bhilsa, *J.N.S.I.,* XIV (I & II), pp. 41-42. Katari, S.L., The Interesting Eran-Ujjain Coins, *J.N.S.I.,* XVI-1, pp. 61-62. Ram Chandra, T.N., A Recent find of Coins from Ujjain, *J.N.S.I.,* XIII (I), pp. 73—75; Vyas, S.N., *Prācina Ujjayinī kī Mudrāyen',* *Nāgarī,* vol. XII, pl. II, pp. 217—223; Altekar, A.S. and Diskalkar, D.B., Kasrawad Hoard of Ujjaini Coins, *J.N.S.I.,* vol. VIII, pt. II, pp. 99—106.

[102] Smith, *I.M.C.,* pp. 136—142. It occurs on tribal coins., cf. Banerjee, A.C., 'So-called Tribal Coinage of Northern India', *J.B.O.R.S.,* XX, pt. II, p. 181. Besides, solar symbols

A critical analysis of these two peculiarities from local coins of Avanti may throw interesting lights on the history of Sun-worship in ancient India. Firstly, the question of the identity of the human figure may be discussed. There are two probabilities as was admitted by Smith himself.[105] Either he may be a king or a deity. If the figure is that of a local king, the natural inference would be that the king was a staunch follower of the Sun-cult as he is the standard-bearer of that deity. There are cases in ancient Indian history when the king showed his strong faith in a cult by becoming a standard-bearer and also by depicting it on coins as in the case of the Guptas who have called themselves as *'Paramabhāgvatas'*[106]—'staunch followers of Vaiṣṇaivism and on their coins *Garuḍadhvaja* may be found. If this analogy is correct, then naturally the king in question becomes a great devotee of Sūrya (*paramasaura*) and the standard may be named as *Sūryadhvaja*. There

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also occur on punch-marked coins. cf. Durga Prasad, Classification and Significance of the Symbols on the Silver Punch-marked Coins of Ancient India, Numismatic Supplement, XLV, *J.A.S.B.*, NS., XXX, 1934.

[103] Altekar, A.S., *'Gupta Kālīna Mudrāyen'*, p. 69ff.

[104] Sankalia, H.D., Three New Specimens of Rare Variety of Eran-Ujjain Coins, *J.N.S.I.*, vol. II, pp. 81-82. Cunningham also listed one such coin in *C.A.I.*, 1891, p. 98, pl. C-II.

[105] Smith, *I.M.C.*, p. 153.

[106] Majumdar, R.C. & Pusalker, A.D. (ed), *The Classical Age*, p. 18.

are literary references to Sun-standards.[107] The Lālā Bhagat Sun-image on a pedestal also gives strength to this tradition.[108] If the figure is that of a deity, then no other god except the Sun may be thought of because of his clear solar associations as there are to right solar symbol composed of crescents and broad arrow-heads attached to central boss and to left the standard surmounted by a rayed Sun. If it is so this becomes one of the earliest known pieces of indigenous evidence about the anthropomorphic form of the Sun-god on the coins because the coin may be placed approximately between 2nd cent. B.C. and 2nd cent. A.D. while the earliest human representation is found on a Mauryan terracotta and the Bodh Gayā relief (2 cent. B.C.–1 cent. A.D.).[109] Whatever might be the real fact of these two probabilities, there is no doubt that the entire picture is indicative of Sun-worship of sectarian type which may have been prevalent in the region of Avanti during a few centuries before and after the Christian era.

There are literary and epigraphic references to the effect that the region of Avanti was a strong hold of the Sun-cult in later times. It has been specifically mentioned by Varāhamihira,[110] the great Sun-worshipper, that he hailed from Avanti. Moreover, Mandasor stone inscription[111] informs us that a Sun-temple was constructed in Daśapur in this very region.

Thus this numismatic evidence confirms the literary tradition that the region of Avanti was devoted to the sectarian Sun-cult. The popularity of Sun-worship in this region may be gauged from the fact that in several other coins from this place solar symbols have been found but the unique significance of this piece of evidence lies in the fact that firstly, it provides us with one of the earliest specimens of solar symbols in association with a human figure, if it is not one of the earliest pieces of anthropomorphic representation of the Sun-god itself. Secondly, it shows a standard of the Sun—a sort of *'Sūryadhvaja'* like *Garuḍadhvaja* of Viṣṇu. Thirdly, it gives us one of the earliest numismatic evidences of the sectarian Sun-worship. In view of the fact that this symbol is distinctive of this place it is probable that for the first time the tradition of the sectarian Sun-worship in the interior may have been evolved in this region.

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[107] *Sāmba P.*, 33. *M.B.H.*, I.185.10 refers to a king named Sūryadhvaja.

[108] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 433.

[109] Coomaraswamy, A.K., *H.I.I.A.*, p. 33, Marshall, J., *J.R.A.S.*, 1908, p. 1096; *J.I.S.O.A.*, III, No. 2, p. 125.

[110] Varāhamihira, *Brihat-Jātaka*. Trans. B. Surya Narayana Rao, ch. XXVIII, Stanza IX.

[111] Fleet (ed), *C.I.I.*, III, pp. 79–88.

With the exception of the Avanti coin type described above the anthropomorphic representation of the Sun god has not been found on early indigenous coins of India. But the figure of the Sun god in human form, however, are met with on certain coins issued by the foreign rulers of India like the Indo-Greeks and the Kuṣāṇas (Pl. 5c). These figures are undoubtedly associated with non-Indian cults of Greeks and Zoroastrians whose solar gods were Helios and Mithra respectively. They furnish us with instances of some parallel forms on one hand and of distant alien prototypes of some variety of Indian Sūrya figures on the other.[112] The figure of Helios riding on a four horsed chariot appears on reverse of coins of Bactrian king—Plato.[113] Its parallel may be seen in the Bodh Gayā Sun-image.[114] The figure of Helios riding on a four horsed chariot which appears on reverse of coins of Philoxenus[115] deserves special mention because such device must have served as prototype[116] of the figures of Helios or Mithra on the coins of Kaniṣka and Huviṣka.[117] The north Indian Sun-icons from the Kuṣāṇa period onwards were close adaptations of such alien form of the deity.[118]

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[112] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 139.

[113] Gardner, P., *British Museum Catalogue of Coins of the Greek and Scythic kings of India*, pl. VI, fig. 11.

[114] Coomaraswamy, *H.I.I.A.*, p. XVII, fig. 61.

[115] Gardner, op. cit., pl. XIII, fig. 9.

[116] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 140.

[117] Gardner, op. cit., p. XXVI, fig. 2, 10, pl. XXVIII, fig. 2–4.

The Sun And His Emblems On Early Indian Seals:

The seal No. 607 discovered by Spooner at Basārh (Pl. 6a) contains a perfect example of a fire-altar with probably a solar disc placed above it. The legend in Gupta character reads *Bhagavata-Ādityasya*.[119] It is more than probable that the fire and the Sun-worshipping Magi priests may have been responsible for this device which associate the Fire and the Sun. A similar device with Indian legend is found upon a seal at Sunet (Pl. 6b). Rapson[120] suggested that it might be due to the Sassanian influence. It may also be suggested that the seal found by Spooner must be the seal of some temple, presumably in eastern India, to the Sun-god such as worshipped in the cults of Irānians.[121] Another seal found at Basārh (Pl. 6c) by Bloch contains the significant legend—*Ravidāsa* (*ḥ*).[122] Another seal discovered by Marshall from Bhīṭā (Pl. 6d) bears the same device with the legend *Ādityasya*.[123] A seal discovered from Rājghāṭ (Pl. 6e) contains the same device with the legend—*'Lolākāditya'*.[124] All these fairly indicate that by the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. the Irānian Magian cult was thoroughly adopted in northern India.

Cult Icons of Sūrya:

✓The sacred literature starts mentioning about the Sun-images only from the fifth century A.D.[125] but actual speci-

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118. Banerjea, *J.I.S.O.A.*, vol. XVI, p. 66.
119. *A.S.I. A.R.*, 1913-1914, pp. 118—120, 140, pl. XLIX.
120. *J.R.A.S.*, 1901, p. 98.
121. Spooner, op. cit., pp. 118—20, associated it with Persians domiciled in India but Banerjea, op. cit., p. 199 takes it to be due to Eastern Irānian Sun-worshipping priests in India.
122. *A.S.I. A.R.*, 1903-1904, p. XL, No. 9.
123. Ibid., 1911-12, p. 58, No. 98.
124. *J.N.S.I.*, vol. XIX, pt. II, pp. 176—78.
125. References to Sun-images are found in some late chapters of the *Matsya Purāṇa*. These chapters have been dated between 550—650 A.D. by Hazra, *Purāṇic Records*, p. 48

mens of Sun-images[126] have been found from one or two centuries before the Christian era. It is significant to note that these Sun-images of the earliest series have been found in association with non-Brāhmaṇical cults.[127] No known iconographic text[128] provides us with the features of the Sun-images of this period. There may be seen foreign element[129] also in these images. All these evidences go to prove that the tradition of Sun-images came to be developed in a few centuries before the Christian era outside the pale of orthodox circle which was definitely aniconic.[130]

Before the evolution of real cult-icons of Sūrya, there are a few human representations of the Sun on the potteries and terracottas of the Maurya—Śuṅga period. The earliest

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and by S.N. Roy, *Paurāṇic Dharma,* p. 165 earlier than 550 A.D. The *Sāmba Purāṇa* whose earliest date goes back to 500 A.D. definitely refers to Sun-images in connection with the Magas. In the inscriptions of the Gupta period also Sun-images are usually referred to.

[126] The Sun-images from Bodh Gayā (1 cent. B.C.), Bhājā (1st or 2nd cent. B.C.), Lālā Bhagat (2nd cent. A.D.) and Anantagumphā (1st cent. A.D.) are specimens of the earliest series. Banerjea, *D.H.I.,* pp. 432-33.

[127] Banerjea, *D.H.I.,* p. 432. Bhājā and Bodh Gayā are connected with Buddhism, Anantagumphā is associated with Jainism. Lālā Bhagat Sun-image which is found in association with the Brāhmaṇical cult of Skanda-Kārtikeya is the latest (2nd cent. A.D.) in the series and in point of time is contemporary with Sun-images of the Kuṣāṇa period.

[128] The descriptions of the Sun-images as given in the *Matsya Purāṇa* (chs. CCLXI; XCIV.1) and the *Brihat Saṁhitā* (ch. 57) which contain earliest records of the Sun-images, do not tally with those found in the Sun-images of this series.

[129] Cunningham, *A.S.I.A.R.,* III.p.97. This point of foreign influence on early Sun-images will be discussed in the subsequent pages.

[130] The *Sāmba Purāṇa,* ch. 29 expressly states that there was no tradition of the Sun-icons in earlier times. We do not find any positive reference to the Sun-image in the Vedic literature.

representation of the Sun-god in human form is found on a pottery piece of the Mauryan period from Patna in which the deity is standing with Aruṇa on a four horsed chariot[131] (Pl. 7a). A Śuṅga terracotta from Chandraketugarh shows the deity flanked by two females and riding on a toy-cart drawn by four horses[132] (Pl. 7b). On Indo-Greek and Kuṣāṇa coins also such representations have been found. They may be regarded as precursors of the Sun-images of the first period (from 2nd-1st centuries B.C. to 2nd cent. A.D.) when there is absence of Irānian features in the Sun-icons.[133]

There are four representative images of the early iconographic tradition of the Sun-cult[134]—of Bodh Gayā, Bhājā, Lālā Bhagat and Anantagumphā. In the Bodh Gayā railing-image (1 cent. B.C.) [135] the central figure (Pl. 8a) is seen riding on one wheeled chariot (*ekacakra*) drawn by four horses and attended on either side by a female figure shooting an arrow. One male bust appears on each side of the relief. The female figures may rightly be taken as Uṣā and Pratyuṣā personifying different aspects of dawn driving away darkness and the male bust may stand for the demon of darkness. There is a rayed disc behind the central figure in the chariot. The latter holds the reins in his hands. There is an umbrella over the figure. The figure has been taken by majority of scholars as of the Sun-god.[136] In view of close resemblances between Bodh Gayā figure and those of Bhājā, Lālā Bhagat, Anantagumphā; and even Mathura (Kuṣāṇa) Sūrya images it may be said that the Bodh Gayā figure stands for the Sun-god. The mere fact that the figure holds reins in his hands like Aruṇa of later iconography, is not sufficient to identify it with Aruṇa—the Sun's charioteer.[137] In the Anantagumphā relief also Sūrya holds rein in his left hand. Further if the figure is that of Aruṇa it is strange to find that the main deity is represented in symbolic form and his attendants are illustrated in human form. The rayed disc may stand for the halo or nimbus of the god which is often found in solar iconography.[138] Moreover, the Bodh Gayā image belongs to the transitional period and therefore it is no surprise to find symbolic as well as anthropomorphic illustrations of the god in one and the same motif. The rayed disc appears to have given birth to the tradition of *prabhāmaṅḍala* (halo) or *śirascakra* (nimbus).[139]

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[131] *J.I.S.O.A.*, vol. III, No. 2, p. 125.

[132] Dasgupta, P.C., Terracotas from Chandraketugarh, *Lalitakalā*, No. 6, Oct. 1959, p. 46. *Indian Archaeology*, 1955-56, pl. LXXII-B.

[133] The Irānian features like *Udīcyaveṣa, avayaṅga, upanātapinaddha* etc. were absent in these Sun-images.

[134] Sivarammurti, C., *Indian Sculpture*, p. 26.

[135] Coomaraswamy, *H.I.I.A.*, p .32.

[136] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 432; Coomaraswamy, *H.I.I.A.*, p. 33, fig. 61; Marshall, *J.R.A.S.*, 1908, p. 1096.

The second example is supplied by the sculpture at the Buddhist cave of Bhājā (1st or 2nd cent. B.C.).[140] The sculpture (Pl. 9a) resembles the Bodh Gayā Sūrya sculpture. There is a royal figure in a four horsed chariot accompanied by two women—one a *chatra*—, and the other a *cauri*-bearer. There are two additional features in this sculpture from that of Bodh Gayā. Firstly, two escorts of riders on horse-back accompany him in addition to two females and secondly, the wheels pass over grossly proportioned nude female figures. There is no male bust. The nude female demons may be taken as representing the demon of darkness and night. There is a strong probability that the royal figure is that of Sūrya in view of the fact that it resembles Bodh Gayā Sūrya, and the Sun has been described as a king of the heavenly world. The escorts of riders on horse-back remind us the Revanta-sculpture which is closely connected with the Sun. Johnston's[141] suggestion that it depicts the story of the war between Śakra and *Asura* as told in the *Saṁyukta Nikāya* presupposes the solar theme of the war between light and darkness. Agrawala's view[142] that it shows Māndhātā on his visit to Uttar Kuru is not supported by many details of the sculpture such as the presence of two women, a four horsed chariot etc.

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[137] Barua, B.M., *Gayā and Bodhgayā,* vol. II, p. 89 thinks that the central figure stands for Aruṇa—the Sun's charioteer while Sūrya himself is represented by the rayed disc.

[138] Banerjea, J.N., Sūrya, Ādityas and the Navagrahas, *J.I.S.O.A.,* XVI, p. 53.

[139] Coomaraswamy, *H.I.I.A.,* p. 41.

[140] Burgess, J., *Architectural Antiquities of Western India,* p. 518; Banerjea, *D.H.I.,* p. 433. Saraswati, S.K., *A Survey of Indian Sculpture,* p. 57. Coomaraswamy, op. cit., p. 25, fig. 24, all identify it with Sūrya.

The third example is provided by the relief at Lālā Bhagat (Kanpur, U.P., 2nd cent. A.D.).[143] The relief (Pl. 9b) is similar to those of Bodh Gayā and Bhājā. The Sun-god rides on a four horsed chariot with one wheel. Like Bhājā relief the two female attendants hold a *Chatra* and a *Caurie* on left and right respectively and two or three well dressed female figures are shown below standing at ease over a group of uncouth nude dwarfs.[144] The importance of this sculpture lies in the fact that it is on a pillar and may therefore indicate that there may have been a tradition of the *Sūryadhvaja* besides the tradition of the *Garuḍadhvaja*[145] as is evidenced by a few local coins of Avanti and literary references.[146] It further shows that there had been intimate association between the Sun-god and Skanda.[147]

The fourth example of the early tradition is supplied by the Sūrya relief of Anantagumphā cave (Pl. 10a) of Khaṇḍagiri group of Jain shrines (Orissa, 1 cent. A.D.).[148] The solar carvings of Anantagumphā are reminiscent of Bodh Gayā and Lālā Bhagat Sun-motifs. The Sun-god rides on one wheeled chariot drawn by four horses. The god is attended by a female figure on either side holding a *Caurī* and a *Chatra*. In his right hand the god holds a lotus and by the left he holds the reins. On the right corner there is a demon in the flying pose.[149] Thus there are many common features in the Anantagumphā and Lālā Bhagat Sūrya reliefs.

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[141] Johnston, E.H., *J.I.S.O.A.*, VII, 1939, pp. 1–7, pl. I & II.

[142] Agrawala, V.S., *Indian Art*, p. 73.

[143] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 433, pl. XXIX, fig. I.

[144] Prayag Dayal thought that these nude dwarfs represent the Bālakhilyas who according to *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* are of short stature and offer praises in honour of the Sun-god. But on the analogy of Bhājā relief they may be called as demons of darkness, cf. *J.I.S.O.A.*, XVI, p. 55.

[145] Cunningham, *A.S.I.A.R.*, 1929-30, p. 130ff, pl. XXXI, compares this pillar with the Besnagar pillar showing *Garuḍadhvaja*.

[146] Srivastava, V.C., The Religious Study of a Symbol on an Avanti Coin, *Memoirs, No.* 2, *B.H.U.*, pp. 133–36.

[147] *J.I.S.O.A.*, XVI, p. 55.

It is a debatable point whether the solar images of the early period were of purely indigenous tradition or they derived inspiration from foreign traditions. Cunningham[150] suggested that the four horses and the general execution resemble to a great extent the Greek representation of Helios—the Greek Sun-god. Banerjea[151] objected to it and opined that the representation of the Sun-god is in conformity with the Vedic tradition. He finds the resemblance between Bodh Gayā Sūrya and Greek Helios as superficial. Banerjea's contention that the Rigvedic description of Sūrya as drawn by one, three, four or seven horses is at the back of this representation is based on insufficient ground. In the Rigvedic descriptions of the Sun's chariot[152] the specific number of horses is given as seven. The *Rigveda* gives no particular significance to number four while dealing with the horses of Sun's chariot. In all the iconographic texts of India the number of horses in the Sun's chariot is given as seven. On the other hand in the Irānian and Greek traditions the Sun's chariot is specifically said to have been drawn by four horses. In the *Avesta*, Mithra traverses[153] the wide firmament in his chariot drawn by four horses. Helios—the Greek Sun-god has been famous for his quadrigo. It is well known that Mithra came to be represented in human form for the first time in the Hellenistic courts in association with Greek Sun-god—Helios. The Hellenistic influence on Buddhist art of India in the post-Alexandrian period is well marked. The Bhājā and Bodh Gayā Sun-images are the products of Buddhist traditions. In view of all these evidences it is suggested that the Sun-images of the early period are evolved under the Hellenistic influence. In this tradition the Mithraic tradition was already mixed up. But the impact of the Hellenistic tradition is limited to the four horse-motif. The features of the divinity along with attendants like Uṣā and Pratyūṣā are of Indian tradition. The chariot, as was admitted by Cunningham also, is Indian in character. The absence of Central Asian features like high boots and Irānian coat in these images leave no room for doubt that these images received the foreign influence through the Hellenistic stream[154] and not directly. In the second period which succeeded it the images are modelled under the influence of Central Asian tradition which must have entered into India in the wake of the Kuṣāṇa invasion.

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[148] *J.I.S.O.A.*, XVI, p. 54.

[149] Ibid., XVI, p. 56.

[150] *A.S.I.A.R.*, III, p. 97.

[151] *J.I.S.O.A.*, XVI, p. 54.

[152] *R.V.*, I.115.3; X.37.3, 49.7; V.29.5, V.45.9; IV.13.3.

[153] Quoted by Cumont, *Mysteries of Mithra*, p. 2.

The second period (2nd cent. A.D.—6th cent A.D.) of solar iconography opens with the introduction of the Magian form of the Sun-cult. It resulted in the adoption of Irānian features such as high boots, northerner's dress etc. There is a blending of the Hellenistic, Indian and Irānian traditions. It is said by Banerjea[155] that the introduction of these features in Sun-images is preceded by their depiction in the figure of some foreign nationals. It is quite probable that some of them as that of Bhārhut (Pl. 10b) may be the figures of Irānianised Sun itself.[156] These figures whether of the Sun himself or of some foreign national must have influenced the Sun-images of the Kuṣāṇa period. Many images from Gandhāra and Mathura regions of the Kuṣāṇa and the post-Kuṣāṇa periods demonstrate these features. A small figure of Sūrya (Pl. 11a) in black slate found in Gandhāra (Kuṣāṇa-period)[157] is seen as wearing high boots[158] and Atlantos crouches beneath the chariot reminding us one of the demons of earlier sculptures. Except the high boots other features such as a chariot drawn by four horses and two female attendants on either side are of the earlier tradition. The Mathura school of art has given us a number of Sun-icons. It is quite understandable in view of the fact that the region of Mathura had been one of the most important centres of Sun-worship of the Magian type[159] and under the patronage of the Kuṣāṇa kings the Magian form of Sun-worship received great fillip.[160] The Sūrya image No. D-46 in the Mathura museum (Kuṣāṇa period)[161] (Pl. 11b) wears a heavy tunic and is seated on a chariot drawn by four horses. He holds a lotus bud in his right hand and a broken dagger in the left. He has long locks and wears a torque round his neck. There are traces of top boots in his partially visible legs. He has Sun-disc or nimbus behind his head. His shoulders are provided with small wings as in the Garuḍa figures.[162] The significance of the image lies in the fact that there is a happy blending of the Vedic[163] and the Irānian features. The chariot drawn by four horses, as in the Bodh Gayā image[164] belongs to the Hellenistic tradition while the lotus in the hand and winged shoulders are of indigenous tradition[165] and the heavy tunic, high boots and dagger are of the Irānian tradition.[166] The figure No. 269 (Pl. 12a) in the Mathura museum (Kuṣāṇa period)[167] depicts Sūrya as seated like a Kuṣāṇa emperor on a chariot drawn by two horses, wearing Indo-Scythian dress consisting of a tunic, trousers and plump boots. On the head there is a helmet held fast by a chaplet and band. There are round ear-rings and a necklace round the neck. Like D-46 he holds a lotus in the right hand and a dagger in the left. There are remnants of the halo at either side of the back and moustaches and a fire-altar on the front face of the pedestal. Thus the figure is wholly Irānianised and particularly the presence of the fire-altar reminds us the Fire-Sun worshipping Magas and confirms the evidence of seals discussed before. In other figures of Mathura museum of the Kuṣāṇa period there is a perfect remodelling on Irānian lines as in figures Nos. 894, 938, 1006 and 2029 of Sūrya where the wing has disappeared. Other figures of the Kuṣāṇa period in Mathura museum show slight variations such as No. 920 and 936 of Sūrya are seated in *bhadrāsana* pose (Pl. 12b). The figure No. 922 is similar to the image No. D-46. There are a few other images such as D-1, D-2[168] and 886[169] which have been taken by scholars as of Sūrya.

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[154] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, pp. 256—59.

[155] *J.I.S.O.A.*, XVI, p. 57.

[156] Barua, B.M., *Bhārhut*, II, pp. 68, 70, III.86.

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[157] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, pl. XXVIII, fig. 3. Its date is a matter of controversy. cf. Coomaraswamy, op. cit., p. 51.

[158] Coomaraswamy, op. cit., p. 66.

[159] Mīrashi, V.V., Three Ancient Famous Temples of the Sun *Purāṇa,* 1966, vol. VIII, No. 1, p. 42. Kālpī is in the region of Mathura.

[160] Coomaraswamy, op. cit., p. 66. Saraswati, op. cit., p. 62; Sivarammurti, op. cit., p. 36.

[161] Agrawala, V.S., A Catalogue of the Brāhmaṇical Images in Mathura Art, *J.U.P.H.S.*, 1949, vol. XXII, p. 167. Vogel, *Mathura Museum Catalogue, B*, p. 104; Coomaraswamy, op. cit., fig. 103, p. 67.

[162] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 433.

[163] Vogel, op. cit., p. 105 remarks, 'it is, however, strange that a Vedic feature of the Sun has been engrafted on an alien-form of the deity'.

[164] Agrawala, op. cit., p. 167.

The extant Sūrya-images of the early Gupta period seldom fail to contain the alien features found in Sūrya-icons of the Kuṣāṇa period.[170] But soon after, gradual idealisation of these features and preponderance of Indian elements began. In Mathura museum there are many images of Sūrya of this period which are linked up on one hand with the alien tradition of the Kuṣāṇa period and on the other display the idealisation and nationalisation of the Gupta art. The Mathura sculpture No. 930 (Pl. 13a) of the Gupta period[171] shows seated Sūrya with a dagger in the left and a lotus in the right. Pot bellied Piṅgala with a *Kulaḥ* cap is seen on the right. Both are haloed and show foreign influence. The figure No. 124 (Pl. 13b) of the same period gives us Sūrya-image squatting in the European fashion on a raised chariot supported on high pillars and decorated with small bells (*Kinkaṇi Jāla*) and fine fretwork. Unlike previous images its number of horses has swelled to seven. The figure No. 122 is a Sūrya seated cross legged with his charioteer–Aruṇa on a chariot drawn by seven horses. Similar to No. 122 are Nos. 895, 1395, 1979 of the late Gupta period and also No. 515 with the difference that there is no Aruṇa in the last. The No. 888 is the figure of a seated Sūrya but with lotuses in both hands and figures of Uṣā and Pratyuṣā on right and left respectively driving away darkness with bows. Similar to No. 888 are figures Nos. 123 and 1173 of the post-Gupta date but the latter is without Uṣā and Pratyuṣā. The images of this type may be regarded as the seated type of Sun-images[172] of the Gupta period. A beautiful representation of this form of Sūrya is carved on a lintel from Garhwā[173] (Pl. 14a).

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[165] Saraswati, op. cit., p. 69.

[166] It is difficult to agree with B.C. Bhattacharya, *Indian Images,* p. 17, when he says that except horses the figure conforms to the description of a seated type of Sūrya as given in the *Viṣṇudharmottara* and *Brihat Saṁhitā.*

[167] Agrawala, op. cit., p. 167. Vogel, *La Sculpture de Mathura,* p. 46, pl. XXXIII (b).

[168] Vogel, op. cit., p. 94, but Agrawala, op. cit., pp. 72-73 takes it to be the figure of Piṅgala.

[169] Agrawala, op. cit., p. 435.

The second variety depicts Sūrya in the *bhadrāsana pose.* The sculptures Nos. 1013, 1559 and 2314 belong to this tradition. The figure No. 1013 (Pl. 14b) shows two haloed Sūrya seated in the *bhadrāsana* pose holding lotuses in both hands and an attendant figure of Piṅgala with a peaked cap on the right side. The figure No. 1559 shows two haloed male figures seated in the European fashion on high seats, holding a dagger in the left hand and probably a lotus in the right hand and wearing Irānian coat, trousers and buskin boots. The figure No. 2314 is similar to it. Presumably there were more figures on the left completing a panel of either four or seven Sūrya-figures with corresponding figures of Daṅḍī on the left.[174] The figure No. 2507 of the post-Gupta period[175] shows horizontal row of squatting Sūryas of which four are still preserved while the part of the fifth halo is also visible. In the proper left corner there is a *Dampati* standing on a lotus. Probably there were seven Sūryas in all in this sculpture.

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[170] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 435; Agrawala, The Gupta Art, *J.U.P.H.S.*, vol. XVIII, 1945–Irānian influence is visible not only in the Sun-images but also in that of Daṇḍa and Piṅgala of the Gupta period.

[171] Agrawala, op. cit., pp. 168–170.

[172] This variety follows *Matsya Purāṇa* and *Viṣṇudharmottara.*

[173] Agrawala, V.S., *A Short Guidebook to the Archaeological Section of the Provincial Museum, Lucknow,* No. 223A.

The third variety is that of the the standing Sūrya of the Gupta period in the Mathura museum. The figures Nos. 595, 1058, 1256 and 2339 belong to this class.[176] This may be regarded as a Gupta innovation in solar iconographic tradition. The figure No. 595 (Pl. 15a) shows a standing Sūrya with lotuses in both hands, Piṅgala holding pen and paper on the right and Daṅḍa holding a trident on the left. Sūrya wears a crown of pearl festoons. The figure No. 1058 is similar to figure No. 595 with the difference that there is a large circular halo and the left arm of Sūrya is raised. The figure No. 1256 is similar to figure No. 595 but it has got moustaches and incised beard-marks. This may be placed between 309 A.D. and 386 A.D.[177] The figure No. 2339 of the Gupta times resembles the figures of this type. The figures of this type show the preponderance of the Indian features. The sculpture No. 1007 (Pl. 15b) shows the bust of Sūrya wearing a string of pearls, a coat and scarf. The hands are lifted upto the shoulders holding lotuses. The crown is high like that of Indra-figures. The figure No. 3884[178] (Pl. 16a) is that of the bust of Sūrya in northern fashion with ornamental *mukuṭa* and a coat of arms. In his ears he has *kuṅḍalas* of lotus buds. He holds two full blown stalked lotuses. Behind the figure there is a halo with three concentric bands. On each side Uṣā and Pratyuṣā are shown discharging arrows. It belongs to the post-Gupta period and resembles two complete Gupta figures No. 595 and 2339 in the Mathura museum.

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[174] Agrawala, op. cit.

[175] Ibid.

[176] Ibid., p. 169ff.

[177] Ibid., p. 69.

This tradition of the solar iconography of the Gupta times was not confined to the Mathura region. It extended far and wide to Madhyadeśa, eastern and western India and even to Afghanistan. The representative Sūrya-images of these regions of the Gupta and the post-Gupta times may be briefly described. One such Sūrya-image (Pl. 16b) has been found from Bhumarā (Nagod, Madhya-Pradesh). This may be classed with the standing variety of the Sun-image. R. D. Banerjee has described this image as follows: 'The god is standing and has two hands. There is a plain halo behind his head and he wears a tall cylindrical head-dress. In his left hand he holds a lotus while his right hand is damaged (it must also have held a lotus). The god wears long boots of soft leather and long coat tied at the waist with a sash. He is attended by two men who wear peculiarly long Scythian coats tied with a belt, and long boots. They also wear tall pointed conical caps like the Scythians. The figure on the right holds a lance or spear in his right hand while that on the left holds a lotus. The horses of the Sun-god, either seven or four in number, are absent.'[179]

Two beautiful Sun-icons have been found from Bengal—one from Kumārpur (Pl. 17a) and the other from Niyāmatpur (Pl. 17b)—both in Rājshāhī district of Bengal. They

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178. Bajpai, K.D., Some New Mathura Finds, *J.U.P.H.S.*, 1948, pp. 117—30.

179. Banerjee, R.D., The Temple of Śiva at Bhumarā, *M.A.S.I.*, No. 16, p. 13, pl. XIVa. Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 436 assigns it to the late Gupta period.

have been dated in the pre-Gupta period most probably in the Kuṣāṇa period (between 1st cent. A.D. and 3rd cent. A.D.).[180] The Sūrya-image from Kumārpur shows the Sun-god standing on a high pedestal. There are seven horses of the Sun's chariot between his two attendants. In his two hands the god holds two lotuses by the stalks (*Sanālapadma*). Broad and heavy features, long tunic, open round eyes, flat and low head-dress are remarkable in it. The Niyāmatpur specimen pictures the god standing erect on a low pedestal between two dwarf attendants, Daṅḍī and Piṅgala, and is dressed in a flat cap and a long tunic fastened to the waist by a belt. He holds a pair of lotuses by stalks in his two hands as enjoined in the *dhyānas*. But the horses of the Sun's chariot are conspicuous by their absence. The wheel of the chariot and the two female attendants of the god and his consorts are also absent in both the images. All these three Sūrya reliefs show Kuṣāṇa affinity mainly in dress and general characteristics. The seven horses found in the Kumārpur relief show the departure from the custom of Kuṣāṇa artists to provide the Sun's chariot with only two or four horses.

At Khair Khaneh (Afghanistan)[181] Hackin discovered a marble image of Sūrya (Pl. 18a) dressed like a Sassanian king and wearing a round apron like tunic fringed with pearls, seated on a chariot the horses of which are being driven by Aruṇa. It shows the god attended by a bearded figure (Kuṅḍī or Piṅgala of Indian texts) on his right and one holding a long staff (Daṅḍa) on his left. It has been dated between 309 A.D.—386 A.D.[182] The Sun-image in the Multan temple belongs to the seated variety as we are informed by Hiuen Tsiang.

There are two images of Sūrya respectively from Kashipur (Pl. 19a) and Deorā (Pl. 19b) in Bengal which may be assigned to the late Gupta period.[183] They 'exhibit the sublime spiritualism of the Sarnath school combined with the emotionalism of its eastern version.'[184] The bluish basalt stone image of Sūrya found at Deorā[185] shows further development of the Sun-icon type. The number of attendants has increased for Daṅḍī, Piṅgala, Aruṇa, Uṣā and Pratyuṣā—all are present here. The god wears a flat *Kirīṭamukuṭa* and other ornaments, is clad in a *dhotī* tied round the waist by a girdle clasped in front; a short sword hangs by his left side. The boots on his legs are partially visible for much of the latter is inserted into the *tri-ratha* chariot pedestal like that of Ellorā Sun-image.[186] Here the Kuṣāṇa dress has disappeared but the features of the Sun-icons of the Pāla period are yet to appear. The Kashipur[187] Sūrya, though similar to Deorā Sūrya in its outline and is of the same age, bears lesser details. Aruṇa and Uṣā and Pratyuṣā are the only companions of the god. The one wheeled chariot is clearly outlined and 'the way in which the horses are treated, and the two demons of darkness are shown beneath the chariot reminds us of the earlier technique'[188] of Bodh Gayā, and Bhājā.

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[180] Saraswati, S.K., *Early Sculpture of Bengal*, p. 12.

[181] *J.I.S.O.A.*, vol. XVI, pl. XIV.2.

[182] Agrawala, op. cit., *J.U.P.H.S.*, 1949, p. 170.

[183] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 436.

A perusal of the common characteristics of the Sun-images of the Gupta period will leave no room for doubt that there is a happy blending of the Irānian and Indian traditions in the evolution of these images. The Irānian coat, high boots, Scythian head-dress, the girdle round the waist etc. found in the Sun-images as well as in his attendants—Daṅḍī and Piṅgala of the period show the adoption of Irānian features to the fullest extent. At the same time the invariable holding of lotuses by stalks in both hands by the Sun-images clearly demonstrate the preponderance of the Indian element in them.

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[184] Saraswati, S.K., op. cit., p. 30.

[185] Majumdar, R.C. (ed.), *History of Bengal, Dacca,* vol. I, pp. 456-57.

[186] Rao, T.A.G., *E.H.I.*, vol. I, pt. II, p. 313, pl. LXXXVIII, fig. 2.

[187] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, pl. XXVIII, fig. 4.

[188] Ibid., op. cit., p. 436.

Let us see how far the extant Sun-images conform with the iconographic traits of the Sun-god as given in the Indian texts. The *Brihatsaṁhitā*[189]—one of the earliest texts in this respect enjoins that the Sun-god should be dressed in the fashion of Northerner, his body from the feet upto the breast being covered.[190] He should wear a crown and hold two lotus flowers by their stalks.[191] His face should be adorned with ear-rings, and he should wear a long necklace and a *viyāṅga*[192] (the sacred waist-girdle of the Irānians) attached. His face should be covered with a cheek-plate.[193] There should be a *prabhāmaṅḍala* shining like a jewel.[194] This text omits the mention of the chariot, the horses and other attendants of the god. But the *Viṣṇudharmottara* of a later date gives fuller details of the Sun-icons. According to this text,[195] the god should have four arms, he should be covered with a coat of mail[196] and he should wear a Northerner's dress[197] and wear an armour,[198] his waist girdle is known as *Yaviyāṅga*[199] (*avyaṅga*), the staff carrying Daṅḍī is to be shown on his left; and the pen and inkpot-bearing Kuṅḍī on his right,[200] a lion-standard is to be placed on the Sun's right side and his four sons—Revanta, Yama and two Manus should stand by him. His four wives—Rājñī, Ri-(Ni)-Kṣubhā, Chāyā and the goddess Suvarccasā are his other attendants. The chariot drawn by seven horses driven by Aruṇa should also be shown. The text explains the inner symbolism of these features of the Sun-images.[201]

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[189] *Ch.* 57, 46—48.

[190] Ibid.—*Kuryādudīcyaveṣaṁ gūḍhaṁ pādāduro yāvat.*

[191] Ibid.—*bibhrāṇassvakararuhe pāṇibhyāṁ paṅkajemukuṭa-dhārī.*

[192] Ibid.—*Kuṅḍalabhūṣitavadanaḥ pralambahāro viyagdavritaḥ.*

[193] Ibid.—*Kamalodara dyutimukhaḥ kañcukaguptas smitaprasan-namukhaḥ.*

[194] Ibid.,—*ratnojvalaprabhāmaṅḍalaśca.*

[195] Rao, *E.H.I.*, vol. I, pt. II, pp. 87-88 takes it as belonging to the *Matsya Purāṇa*.

[196] *Viṣṇudharmottara*, III.67.2—11.

[197] Ibid.—*Udīcyaveṣas svākāras sarvābharaṇabhuṣitaḥ.*

[198] Ibid.—*Kavacenābhisaṁvritaḥ.*

[199] Ibid.—*Kartavyā raśanā cāsya Yaviyāṅgetisañgitāḥ.* In place of *Yaviyāṅga* some texts have *pānīyāṅg.*

[200] Daṅda and Piṅgala are Indian names of Irānian Sraosha and Rashnu—brothers and attendants of Mithra in the Irānian mythology where Rashnu weighs the evil and good deeds of the dead soul and Sraosha as the discipline

The *Matsya Purāṇa* enjoins that the image of the Sun should be made with beautiful eyes, seated in a chariot and holding a lotus.[202] There should be seven horses and one *cakra* in the Sun's chariot, and a coronet beaming red should be placed on the head.[203] He should be decorated with ornaments and the two hands should hold lotuses, the latter should be placed on his shoulder, as if in sport.[204] His body should be shown as covered with a bodice of two pieces of cloth. The feet should be shown simply as brilliant.[205] Daṅḍa and Piṅgala should be placed as guards with swords in their hands.[206] Aruṇa and other attendants should be shown.[207] The Sun-god should be seated either on the chariot or on the lotus and holding a lotus.

The *Agni Purāṇa* also gives a few descriptions of the Sun-images. According to it the Sun should be placed on

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personified leads him to the heaven. In view of these functions the attributes of a spear for Daṅḍa and of pen and paper for Piṅgala (*Viṣṇudharmottara*, III.67.7) acquire meaning. cf. Zachner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, p. 95ff.

[201] See *J.I.S.O.A.*, XVI, p. 65, fn. 1.

[202] *Matsya P.*, 261.1—*Rathasthaṁ kārayeddevaṁ padmahastaṁ sulocanam.*

[203] Ibid.—*saptāśvaṁ caikacakraṁ ca rathaṁ tasya prakalpayet/ mukuṭena vicitreṇa padmagarbhasamaprabham.*

[204] Ibid.3—*nānābharaṇaṁbhūṣābhyāṁ bhujābhyāṁ dhrita puṣkaram/ skandhasthe puṣkare te tu līlayaiva dhrite sadā//*

[205] Ibid.4—*Colakacchannavapuṣaṁ kvaciccitreṣu darśayet/ vastrayugmasamopetaṁ caraṇao tejasā vrītao.*

[206] Ibid., 261.5,6.

[207] Ibid., 7—10.

either a chariot or a horse. On his right side inkpot— and pen-bearing Kuṅḍī and on his left side *Daṅḍa*-bearing Piṅgala[208] should be placed. Near them Rājñī and Nikṣubhā should also be made.

The *Viśvakarma-Śilpa*[209] also gives an account of the Sun-god as follows: His great chariot has one wheel and is drawn by seven horses, he has a lotus in each hand, wears an armour and has a shield over his breast, has beautiful straight hair, is surrounded by a halo of light, has good hair and apparel, is decorated with gold ornaments and jewels, has on his right side the figure of Nikṣubhā and on the left that of Rājñī with all sorts of ornament. His hair and necklace are bright. His chariot mentioned above is called by the name of *Makaradhvaja*. He wears a crown. The figure is surrounded by a halo. Daṅḍa (Yama) is represented as one faced and Skanda as having a bright conch-shell. These two figures with the form of man are placed in front. Vārcā on a lotus is placed on a horse. His body is represented as lustrous, and he is the one giver of light to all the worlds. A *Sūryamaṅḍala* is to be made by placing nutmeg and vermillion. He has four hands or only two with jewels adorning them. In both of his hands there are lotuses. He is seated on a chariot drawn by horses of variegated colour. His two gate-keepers Daṅḍa (Yama) and Piṅgala (Agni) have swords in their hands.

From an account of the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*[210] some information may be gathered about the attendants of the Sun-god. Skanda also known as Daṅḍanāyaka, on the left, Agni also known as Piṅgala on the right are to be placed. Skanda and Agni are also known as Rājña and Srauṣa. There is pro-

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208. *Matsya P.,* 51.1–3. Since Kuṅḍī is also a name of Piṅgala there is no sense in placing Piṅgala on both the sides. It appears that on the left side Daṅḍi was to be placed but due to mistake Piṅgala is mentioned.

209. Quoted by N. N. Vasu, *Archaeological Survey of Mayūrabhañja.* See *E.H.I.,* vol. I, pt. II, p. 302.

210. *Bhaviṣya P.,* 124.13–29.

vision for one Aśvinī Kumāra on either side. The goddesses Rājñī and Nikṣubhā are also required to be made to stand on either side of Sūrya.

There are many South Indian texts such as *Aṁśumadbhedāgama* and *Suprabhedāgama* which do not mention these alien features.[211] The South Indian images of the Sun-god are on these lines as they are free from Irānian features. Reference may be made to the characteristics of the Sūrya images of South India only by way of comparison. The South Indian Sun-worship developed on indigenous lines and there was hardly any impact of the east Irānian form of Sun-worship.[212] In the Sun-images found in South India such as at Paraśuā-rāmeśvara temple (Pl. 20a) (Guḍimallam, N. Arcot, 7th cent. A.D.),[213] on the north side of Mahābāli-puram and in the cave at Trichinopolly[214] (7th cent. A.D.), from Kumbakonam[215] (Pl. 20b) and several other places, there are no coats of mail, boots, Aruṇa, horses, halo and accessories. In place of halo there is a circle and in place of coat there is *udarabandha.*[216] A comparative study of these texts and actual images of the Sun of the South Indian tradition will reveal that there are fundamental differences between the Sun-images of North Indian and South Indian traditions. These differences may be noted in the words of Rao[217]—'The South Indian figures of Sūrya have, as a rule, their hands lifted up as high as the shoulders, and are made to hold lotus flowers which are only half blossomed; the images have invariably the *udarabandha,* and their legs and feet are always left bare. The North Indian images, on the other hand, have generally their hands at the natural level of the hips or the elbows and are made to carry full-blown lotuses which rise upto the level of the shoulders and their forelegs have coverings resembling modern socks more or less in appearance and the feet are protected with a pair of footwear resembling boots. The *udarabandha* is not found in the northern variety of the images of the Sun-god, but there is a thin cloth or a sort of coat of mail shown as being worn on the body.... The common features of both Southern and Northern varieties of Sūrya are that the head is in all cases adorned with a *Kirīṭa* surrounded by a circular halo or *prabhāmaṅḍala*.'

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[211] For details see, Rao, T.A.G., *E.H.I.*, p. 306ff.

[212] Sastri, H. Krishna, *Iconography of South Indian Gods and Goddesses,* fig. 143.

[213] Rao, *T.A.G., E.H.I.*, vol. I, pt. II, pp. 311-12.

[214] Dubreuil, J.G., *Iconograph of Southern India* (Tr. by A. C. Martin), p. 109, pl. LXIX.

[215] Sastri, H. Krishna, op. cit.

[216] Rao, T.A.G., *E.H.I.*, vol. I, pt. II, pp. 301—12, pls. LXXXVII-LXXXVIII, XCI, XCII and XCIV.

[217] *E.H.I.*, vol. I, pt. II, p. 311.

The features of the Sun-image outlined by the North Indian texts are found in the Sun-images of the Kuṣāṇa, Gupta and early mediaeval periods. There are many alien traits in them such as *udīcyaveṣa, avayaṅga, upānatpinaddha* etc. There cannot be any doubt that these alien traits emphasise the foreign origin of Northern variety of the Sun-cult introduced in India in the beginning of the Christian era or even much earlier.[218] These features have been explained by many scholars.[219] The Northerner's dress (*Udīcyaveṣa*) consists of a long heavy coat covering practically the whole of the body. This type of garment, though not in vogue among the Indians of ancient times, was much in use among her early foreign rulers of the Śaka, Pahlava and Kuṣāṇa stocks.[220] It also includes boots of not only Sūrya himself but also of some of his male and female attendants. No doubt Daṅḍa and Piṅgala have got Irānian origin. The *avyaṅga*[221] is the Indianised form of *Aivyāonghen*, the sacred waiste-girdle of the Irānians. These features are clearly visible in the Kuṣāṇa and the Gupta Sūrya icons, though the elaborate descriptions found in the *Viṣṇudharmottara* are yet to appear in the mediaeval Sun-icons.

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[218] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 437.

[219] Banerjea, J.N., Myths Explaining Some Alien Traits of the North Indian Sun-icons *I.H.Q.*, 1952, vol. XXVIII, p. 1ff.

[220] *Chandra, Moti, 'Prā cīna Bhāratīya Veṣabhūṣā*, p. 119; Agrawala, V.S., *Harṣacarita Eka Sāṅskritika Adhyayana*, p. 150f suggests that special cloth for long coat was imported from Irān.

[221] Rao, T.A.G., *E.H.I.*, vol. I, pt. II, p. 308ff.

Now the question arises whether the Sun-icons of the type described above had their proto-type in the Irānian Mithra. The answer seems to be in negative since we do not find the representation of Mithra—the Sun-god in human form in the earliest times. He was represented by the symbols.[222] It has rightly been suggested[223] that the early North Indian Sūrya images were based upon the representations of solar deities on the coins[224] of the Indo-Greek kings like Apollodotus II, Philoxenus, and Telephus because Mithraism was already Hellenised when it reached India and there was identification of Mithra with the Greek Sun-gods as Apollo-Helios[225] who served as the model for the anthropomorphic representation of Mithra. Thus ultimately the source was Indo-Greek.

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Several Sūrya images of the early mediaeval period (6th cent. A.D.—12th cent. A.D.) have been discovered from different corners of India. These images possess elaborate descriptions unknown before. In the northern region Mathura museum collections[226] possess a number of such Sūrya-icons. They may be divided into two varieties of the seated and the standing Sūrya-images. The latter variety outnumbers the former. The figures No. D-45, 542, 1564 and D-48 (Pl. 21a) belong to the first variety and generally picture Sūrya as seated on his chariot drawn by seven horses with the figure of Aruṇa and two female attendants on both sides. Sometimes traces of Uṣā and Pratyuṣā are also found. In figure No. 542 Sūrya is associated with Daṅḍa and Piṅgala. There are traces of foreign influence as in figure No. 1564 where Sūrya is seated in the European fashion. The figures No. D-3, D-15, D-16, D-33, 155, 750, 822, 823, 890, 928, 1095, 1096, 1097, 1208, 1215, 1220, 1290, 1698, 2031, 2339 (Pl. 21b) belong to the second variety. In these the Sun-god is seen standing with the halo and pearl-fastoon behind the head. They generally hold lotus in the hand and high boots in the feet. He is attended by Piṅgala and Daṅḍa and two female attendants. In between feet there are Aruṇa, Uṣā and Pratyuṣā also and sometimes in addition to them two females probably Nikṣubhā and Rājñī are also seen. In figure No. 1220 there is an additional description in the sense that in the upper most corner there are seen four armed Viṣṇu on Garuḍa and a pair of flying Vidyādharas while in figure No. 1290 there are the horse-figures of the two Aśvinī-Kumāras.

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[222] Hazra, *Studies,* vol. I, p. 31.

[223] Banerjea, op. cit., p. 438.

[224] Allan, J., *B.M.C.,* pl. XXXII, i, pl. X-5-9—Telephus silver coin shows the nimbate Sun-god and Moon-god with a crescent on his head. It may be regarded as the proto-type of the Kuṣāna Mithra and Mao. Apollo in Apollodotus-coin wears boots.

[225] One of the Nimrud Dagh Cairn Sepulchre of Antiochus I of Commagne (69-38 B.C.) has the inscription—*Apollo-Mithras-Helios-Hermes.*

[226] Agrawala, op. cit., *J.U.P.H.S.,* vol. XXII, 1949, pp. 171—73.

Khajurāho temple-complex also supplied Sun-images of two varieties—the seated and the standing. The standing variety may be divided into two classes. There are a few Sun-images in which background descriptions are elaborately found while there are a few others in which the background descriptions are scarcely seen. In the standing variety of Khajurāho the most famous Sun-image is the central image of the Citragupta temple (Pl. 22a). The Sun wears *Kirīṭa-mukuṭa, Kuṅḍala,* garland, sacred thread (*Yagñopavīta*) and *avayaṅga*. He has high boots. There is a halo round his head. He is attended by Daṅḍa and Piṅgala on his left and right side. There are attendant deities as Aśvins, Nikṣubhā, Rājñī, Aruṇa, Mahāśvetā etc. There are seven horses also. There are a few other Sun-images of the standing variety found from this place.[227] There are many Sun-images of the standing variety where there are very little background details.[228] In the seated variety the Sun-god is seen seated in the *padmāsana* pose. There are a few others in which the Sun-god is seen in *utkuṭakāsana* pose[229] (Pl. 22b).

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[227] Awasthi, R.A., *Khajurāho ki Deva Pratimāyen,* p. 172.
[228] Ibid., p. 173.

The Sūrya-icons of this period have also been found from eastern India which generally follow two varieties[230] of northern India—the seated and the standing types. A fine bronze or octo-alloy figure of Sūrya of the early mediaeval period has been found at Chauddagrām (Pl. 23a) (Tippera, Bengal). The god sits inside the car of one wheel while seven spirited horses are represented underneath the car as drawing it along. There is a prominent girdle round the abdomen. The Nāga below Aruṇa is also visible. Uṣā and Pratyuṣā along with Daṅḍī and Piṅgala are also present there. The miniature is undoubtedly a remarkable sample of the East-Indian Art of the 7th-8th century A.D.[231] It follows the Deorā and Kashipur reliefs except that it is seated.[232] The Sūrya image with its composite elements of attendants, charioteer, horses etc. represents not a very distant approach to the full fledged stela composition of the Pāla art.[233] The elaborate standing Sūrya figure of Bengal and Bihar of the Pāla and Sena times show over-crowding with accessory figures and details. They are very often profusely ornamented, the stela (the black slab) is usually painted with the *Kīrtimukha* design on its top centre and companions (besides mentioned above, others are his several queens—Rājñī, Nikṣubhā,[234] Chāyā, Suvarccasā, the earth goddess—Mahāśvetā) of the main deity are arranged in several parallel layers by his side. The Sūrya image (Pl. 23b) from Sukhabāspur (Dacca)[235] is elaborately ornamented with the *Kirtimukha* design at the top. The god stands erect in his car. His cloth descends down to the knee and a second piece of cloth is flatly hung in his front. The girdle is profusely ornamented. Two daggers are attached to it. The leg is covered by highly carved foot-wears. The breast is protected by the armour. He wears ear-rings and necklaces and holds two lotuses in his two hands. Piṅgala and Daṅḍa with top boots are seen on his sides. Two wives—Saraṇyū and Nikṣubhā stand on the left and right sides of the god. Uṣā is placed in front of the Sun-god. Aruṇa is driving the Sun's chariot of one wheel and seven horses. Below it there is probably a *Nāga*. Two female archers are also present there to the right and left of Piṅgala and Daṅḍa. The pair of Vidyādharas are also present. The Vikrampur Sūrya image[236] is similar to that of Sukhabāspur but the umbrella sign is exhibited at the top and it has eleven Ādityas in addition which are represented in miniature round the main image. The lower part of Aruṇa is fashioned like a bird. The Ram Sing Sūrya image[237] is almost a replica of the image of Vikrampur. The Sun-image from Arial (Dacca)[238] also is similar to it. Another image from Dacca resembles Sukhabāspur image in all particulars but there is no sculptural sign at the top, though the eleven Ādityas are present.

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[229] Awasthi, R.A., p. 174.

[230] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 439.

[231] Bhattasali, N.K., *Iconography of Buddhist and Brāhmaṇical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, p. 172, pl. LIX.

[232] Saraswati, S.K., op. cit., pp. 31-32 assigns it to the 7th century A.D.

[233] Majumdar, R.C., *History of Bengal*, Dacca, vol. I, pl. XXX, fig. 76, LXVIII, fig. 166 etc. Banerjee, R.D., *Eastern School of Mediaeval Sculpture*. See French, J.C. *Art of the Pāla Empire of Bengal.*

[234] Rao, T.A.G., *E.H.I.*, vol. II, p. 305.

The Sūrya image No. 5 from Dacca[239] resembles No. 1 but *Nāga* is absent and the armour is of different design.

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[235] Bhattasali, op. cit., 169, $\frac{\text{3.A. (III)-a, pl. LVIII.}}{1}$

[236] Ibid., $\frac{\text{3-A (III) -a.}}{2}$

[237] Ibid., $\frac{\text{3-A (III) -a.}}{3}$

[238] Ibid., $\frac{\text{3-A (III) -a.}}{4}$

[239] Ibid., $\frac{\text{3-A (III) -a.}}{5}$

The image No. 6[240] possesses no usual seven horses. The image No. 7[241] is similar to No. 1 with the difference that the eleven Ādityas are present. In addition there are a few other pieces of Sūrya-images in Bengal. The image of the Sun-god in the house of the Gosvāmī at Sonarang (Dacca)[242] is peculiar in one respect i.e. there is no redundant detail over the whole sculpture except two Vidyādharas and *Kīrti-mukha* but this want is compensated by representations of eight planets, twelve Zodiacal signs, miniature figures of Kārtikeya and Gaṇeśa, six male figures sitting cross-legged and seven female figures sitting cross-legged. The Faridpur Sūrya image[243] is interesting as it pictures Sūrya as smiling and the coat of mail is exquisitively carved like fine embroidered muslin. One Sūrya image from Tippera is peculiar in the sense that it shows eleven Ādityas in a sitting posture. One well preserved Sūrya-image has been found at Rampal and is now preserved at Feringibazar.[244] Another image preserved in Dacca collectorate compound shows only Uṣā while Chāyā and Nikṣubhā are absent.[245] The Bairhāṭṭā inscribed sculpture of seated Sūrya (12th century A.D.) is crowded with the seated male attendants, the standing female companions of the god and the miniature figures of eight other *grahas* and an inscription describing him as remover of all diseases (*Samasta-rogāṇāṁ hartā)*.[246]

Orissa has also supplied us with a few remarkable Sūrya images of the mediaeval times. Here again there are two varieties—one standing and the other seated. An early mediaeval Sūrya image from Khiching[247] (Pl. 24a) is a fine specimen of the standing variety. It is an excellent specimen of the Orissan iconographic art. There is another Khiching Sūrya relief[248] which belongs to the much rarer variety of the seated Sun. It depicts the two armed Sun-god seated in *padmāsana* on a doubled petalled lotus with his two hands holding full blossomed lotuses by their stalks. The god wears a conical crown, ear-rings, necklaces and other ornaments and the *udīcyaveṣa* is just faintly suggested by the artist. Aruṇa driving the seven horses is the only accessory motif. The sweet smiling expression of the face and excellent modelling endow it with a quality which is rarely seen in the reliefs of eastern Bengal.

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[240] Bhattasali, op. cit., $\frac{\text{3-A (III) -a.}}{6}$

[241] Ibid., $\frac{\text{3-A (III) -a.}}{7}$

[242] Ibid., p. 172.

[243] Ibid., p. 173.

[244] Ibid., pl. LXXVI (b).

[245] Ibid., p. 173ff.

[246] Majumdar, R.C., *History of Bengal,* vol. I, p. 456.

Western India was not far behind in this respect. Though stylistically different from their eastern Indian counterparts, these western Indian images of Sūrya resemble the latter in the broad outlines of their iconography. A Sun-relief (Pl. 24b) of the 8th century A.D. has been found from Ellora.[249] There is a circular halo round his head and the god holds lotus stocks with sprouting bunches of flowers in his two hands. The Kuṣāṇa dress has, no doubt, disappeared but it is not crowded with companions of god as in the mediaeval Sūrya images of Bengal. The panel on the door frame at Kadvār temple (pre-Cālukyan, 8th or 9th century A.D. before 950 A.D.)[250] in Gujarat has an image of Sūrya first from right. It is seated on a lotus in a peculiar pose which may be described as *utkutakāsana* or raised hips.[251] It very much resembles the pose of Maheśa from Kāverīpakkam and almost similar pose is noticed in the Sun-image on a panel at the Sun-temple at Thān. The figure seems to have had two hands only which bear a lotus each as high as the shoulder. Perhaps it wore boots too.

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[247] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 439, pl. XXX, fig. 2.

[248] Ibid., pl. XXX, fig. 3.

[249] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 440.

[250] Sankalia, H.D., *Archaeology of Gujarat*, p. 157. Cousens, H., *Somanātha*. pl. XXXII and XXXIV.

[251] Rao, T.A.G., *E.H.I.*, vol. I, part II, p. 317 does not name the pose.

The Sūrya-temple at Modhera (Gujarat)[252] has numerous figures of Sūrya (11th cent. A.D.) on niches and wall. Of these Burgess[253] illustrates two. The figure No. 5 (Pl. 25a) of Burgess stands in *Samabhaṅga* in a chariot drawn by seven horses, it had ten hands both of which are now broken and covers a full blown conventional lotus. It is richly adorned with a *kirīṭamukuṭa, kuṇḍalas, hāras,* an armour covering the chest, and a girdle-*avyaṅga,* high boots and an *uttarīyavastra* in the shape of a long garland. Below on the right is Piṅgala, on the left Daṇḍa and behind each of these attendants are Aśvins—the horse-faced gods. This closely resembles Mathura Sūrya figures particularly No. 1290 in the sense that both have Aśvinī Kumāras.

The figure No. 6 (Pl. 25b) differs from No. 5 in a few points. It is less richly carved; the lotuses stand above the shoulders and the boots seem to be impressed. There are no Aśvins and the attendants are not seated but standing. There are no horses also and the figure stands on a lotus, above it on either side is a devotee or Vidyādhara in the act of praising. Sankalia[254] has described one Sūrya-figure from the southern niche. It is similar to the figure No. 5. Instead of Aśvins on either side there are females, most probably Rājñī and Nikṣubhā.

The Sūrya-image in the Rajkot museum resembles a Sūrya-image from Rajasthan[255] particularly in its peculiarly flat top and vertical-side *mukuṭa.* It has also a circular *prabhā* and below are Piṅgala, Daṇḍa and goddesses. On the so-called Junāgadh *Toraṇa*[256] (Pl. 26a) Sūrya is represented in two slightly different ways. In the niche on the pediment the figure is seated in *utkutakāsana* in a chariot drawn by seven horses. In his hands he carries lotuses with long stalks. Outside the niche are Uṣā and Pratyuṣā chasing away darkness with bows and arrows. In other niches on sides and on the pediment Sūrya is standing with an attendant on either side in the lowest niche, in others with garland-weavers. In all there are eleven figures which together with one enshrined in a temple would make up the twelve Ādityas bearing lotuses. They in their narrow waist and long lotus stalks remind us a similar figure from Ellora. Thus these figures follow *Brihat-Saṁhitā* and resemble Bhūmarā and Mathura figures of the Gupta times.

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[252] Sankalia, H.D., op. cit., p. 84.

[253] Burgess, J., *A.S.I.W.C.,* IX, pl. LVI, fig. 5 & 6.

[254] Sankalia, op. cit., p. 158, fig. 67.

[255] Rao, T.A.G., *E.H.I.,* vol. I, pt. II, pl. XC, figs. 1 and 2.

[256] Ibid., vol. I, part II, pl. XCV.

There are certain unique figures of Sūrya of Northern India which deserve notice from the point of view of cult-syncretism. On literary[257] and archaeological[258] evidences it may be demonstrated that there has been occasional identifications of Sūrya with Śiva, Brahmā and Viṣṇu and also with Buddha. The *Pañcāyatana pūjā* marks the climax of this trend. This tendency of cult-syncretism also found expression in the iconography. The *Trimūrtis* of the mediaeval period found from different regions of India are illustrations of this feature. One such figure (Pl. 26b) has been recovered from the shrine of Lambojī Mātā at Delmal[259] (N. Gujarat) of the 12th cent. A.D. It is seated on a Garuḍa with legs crossed in front, below which are shown small figures of a *haṁsa* and a lion or tiger. The figure has three heads, the middle one has a crown similar to that of Sūrya from Sidhpur and Dhanb (Gujarat). It seems to have eight hands, four of which are broken which held a lotus each, of which one is seen even now. The back hands hold *triśūla* and the left a hooded serpent. On the chest there is perhaps a *kavaca* and on the feet impressed boots can be clearly seen. The figure seems to combine Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Sūrya as shown by *vāhanas* and emblems but greater emphasis seems to have been laid on Sūrya. An image in which Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Sūrya are blended into one is reported from Kirāḍu[260] and Harṣanātha (Rajasthan). It has one head and ten hands. Another image from Pavagarh has Sūrya, Brahmā and Śiva.[261] Another image from Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa temple of Somanātha in Kathiawar is found seated in *padmāsana* in the *dhyāna* on a chariot. It is symbolically represented by seven horses and is driven by a small charioteer who is seated in front of the figure. The figure has three faces. Originally it had eight hands. The figure seems to have worn an *udarabandha* and a girdle. If the figure is to be identified with that of Sūrya it would be an unique image of that deity. If it had four faces and eight hands it would be undoubtedly Sūrya as described by *Śāradātilaka*.[262] But there is no fourth face, the only possibility remains that it may be a *Trimūrti* with Sūrya as the principal god similar to Delmal *Trimūrtī*. The three-headed and eight-armed standing Sūrya in Chiddambaram temple[263] is also similar to *Trimūrti* except that it is barefooted as it is natural for south Indian sculpture. Another eight armed seated image of Delmal type is carved on the western side of the central *Bhadra* of the Śiva temple called Dūlā-Deo at Khajurāho.[264] Similarly, there is in Bangaon[265] (Bundelkhand) a standing figure of *Trimūrti* (Pl. 27a) which represents the Sun-god with all his emblems and associates. It is suggested that it is an unique representation of the Sun-god by one of the six classes of the Sun-worshippers who adore him in the triple form. There is a very unique syncretic image in which Sūrya and Śiva are the constituents in the collection of the V.R.S. museum, Rājshāhī described as '*Mārtaṅḍa-Bhairava*'.[266] It is a three-faced and ten-armed image of the 12th century A.D. found at Māṇḍā (Rājshāhī) containing usual accessories noticeable in other well developed Sūrya-icons of this region. Its central face is placid, the side ones being fierce. Back hands possess many Śaivite emblems such as a *Triśūla*, a *Śaktī*, a *Khaṭvāṅga*, a *Nīlotpala*, a *Ḍamaru* and a *Sarpa*. This image generally conforms the *dhyāna-mantra* variety of the Sun appearing in the *Śāradā-tilakatantra*[267] where it is said that the Sun is half (a part) of Śiva (*Ballabhārddha*). A composite representation of Brahmā and Sūrya may be recognized in the beautiful image (11th century A.D.) from Mahendra (Dinajpur, Bengal) and now in the collection of V.R.S. museum.[268] This relief has, no doubt, much in common with the *dhātri* aspect of the twelve Ādityas as mentioned in the *Viśvakarmāvatāra Śāstra* but the increased number of hands (6 and not 4), its solar features and rosary and water vessel in two of its hands bring it in the line with the group of the composite icons. The association of Sūrya and Viṣṇu is well known and images of Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa hailing from different parts of India have been reported.[269] Besides, Sūrya has also been associated with Buddha as in the composite sculpture from Bihar (now in the Gupta Gallery of Archaeological Section of the Indian Museum) where there are figures of the standing Buddha and Sūrya in the right and left side of Harihara. It has rightly been suggested[270] that they are no mere attendants but are really cult-objects. A fragmentary relief from eastern India probably from Orissa (11th or 10th century A.D.), now in the collection of the Asutosh Museum shows in an interesting manner the combined representation of Sūrya and Lokeśvara.[271]

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[257] Winternitz, M., op. cit., vol. I, p. 536. Monier Williams, W., *Religious Thought and Life in India*, pp. 411-12. Majumdar, R.C. (Ed.), *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, pp. 327-28, *Matsya P.*, LV.3.5, *Brahma P.*, 33.11.14, *Kālikā P.*, 74.113, *Mārkaṇḍeya P.*, Ch. 109.5—*Agni P.*, Ch. 73 and many later Upa Puraṇas identify Sūrya, Śiva and other gods. *Kūṭa Mantra* of Java (Quoted by Biswas, D.K. 'Sūrya and Śiva', *I.H.Q.*, 1948, vol. 24, p. 142ff) shows this religious syncretism.

[258] Nirmand copper plate inscription identifies Śiva with Mihira (Persian Mithra), Fleet, J.F., *C.I.I.*, vol. III, pp. 288-89.

[259] Sankalia, H.D., op. cit., p. 163. Burgess, J., *A.S.I.W.C.*, vol. IX, *Architectural Antiquities of N. Gujarat*, pp. 88-89, pl. LXIX, LXXI-7.

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[260] Sharma, Dashrath, *Rajasthan Through the Ages*, p. 381ff.

[261] Burgess, J., *A.S.I.W.C.*, 1907-1908, p. 41 and 1912, p. 58.

[262] Quoted by Bhattacharya, B.C., *Indian Images*, p. 18.

[263] Sastri, H. Krishna, *Iconography of South Indian Gods and Goddesses*, p. 236, fig. 154.

[264] Kramrisch, S., *Hindu Temple*, vol. II, pp. 373-74, pl. VI.

[265] Lal, Hira, "Trimūrtis in Bundelkhand", *I.A.*, May, 1918, pp. 136-137.

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[266] Sarkar, K.C., A New Specimen of Sūrya from Varendra, *A.I.O.C.*, Patna, 1930, p. 243 and *I.H.Q.*, vol. II, No. 3, pp. 465–70. He takes it to be of *Mārtaṅḍa-Bhairava* type while Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 540, finds no Brahmā element but only the combined forms of Sūrya, Śiva and Viṣṇu.

[267] *Śāradātikaka*, XIV.41.2, Quoted by Sarkar, K.C., op. cit., p. 243ff.

[268] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 550.

[269] Banerjea, J.N., Viṣṇu and Sūrya—A Study in Cult-icons, *J.I.S.O.A.*, XIII, p. 55–129; XIV, pp. 1–74; XVI, pp. 47–100. Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa from Kovil (Tanjor) is another example. cf. Rao, op. cit. Agrawala, V.S., *Rajasthan kī Prācīna Mūrti-kalā men Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa Tathā Mārtaṅḍa-Bhairava Pratimāyen* (H.), *Śodha Patrikā*, Udaipur, VIII, June 1957.

Sūrya, in imitation of other cult-gods like Viṣṇu and Śiva was given a family[272] with many wives, sons, and attendants.[273] The *dvādaśādityas* and *Navagrahas* also came to be worshipped as component parts of the solar religion.[274] The iconographical traits of these may be seen in brief. All *dvādaśādityas* have been given four hands[275] while the *Viśvakarmāśāstra*[276] gives only two hands to Pūṣan and Viṣṇu. Separate images of these Ādityas are very rare, they are usually shown carved on the sides and tops of the detached frames or in the *prabhāvali* of Sūrya. The architectural frame in the Junāgarh museum shows two-armed figures of Sūrya carrying lotuses in separate niches, three on either side and five on the top (eleven in all). Except the central figure which is shown as seated with Uṣā and Pratyuṣā, all the other ten figures are shown standing and attended by female companions. Four of the *Navagrahas* (probably Śukra and Śani and certainly Rāhu and Ketu) are also placed on the top. The central figure of missing Sūrya would complete the theme.[277] Almost similar *toraṇa* sculptured with *Ādityas* and inset central figure of Sūrya has been found at Dhank.[278] There are two figures of Sūrya's consorts—one in the Rajkot museum and the other at Dhank.[279] The *Navagrahas* also found lithic representation. The stone slabs with the figures of these *grahas* usually standing and rarely seated were used as architectural pieces in the mediaeval temples of different parts of India. A late Gupta fragmentary sand-stone relief from Sarnath[280] (now exhibit No. 1536 in the Indian museum) contains the figures of four planets—Brihaspati, Śukra, Śani and Rāhu. All are two armed, the first three are standing in graceful pose, while Rāhu has been given a grim face, protruding eyes and hair tied up. Ketu is not shown in it. Originally it seems to have eight *grahas* only. Ketu was later addition as is evidenced by eight *grahas* in the lintel slabs of a Śiva shrine of Bhuvaneswar (Orissa) of the Bhaumakāra period while Ketu makes appearance from the Gaṅga period.[281] In some sculptures from Bengal such as at Kankandighi, the representation began with the figure of Gaṇapati and depicts nine planets. An unique mode of representing the *grahas* is found in twelve spoked wheel (*Navagraha-cakra*) found among the ruins of Khiching (Pl. 27b).[282] They seem to be the regular object of the worship. In Somanātha temple there is the representation of nine planets while they are depicted as seated in a panel from Sūrya-temple at Thān.[283] The iconographical representations of *Navagrahas* do not seem to follow canonical texts. Revanta images have also been found.[284]

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[270] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. 547, pl. XLVIII, fig. 1.

[271] Ibid., p. 548, p. XLVIII, fig. 3.

[272] Bhattasali, N.K., op. cit., p. 160.

[273] *Sāmba Purāṇa,* 29.13b–24b.

[274] Majumdar, R.C., (ed.), *The Age of Imperial Kanauj,* p. 350.

[275] Rao, T.A.G., *E.H.I.,* vol. I, pt. II, p. 310.

[276] Quoted by Rao, op. cit., p. 310-11.

[277] Rao, T.A.G., op. cit., p. 317, pl. XCV.

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[278] Sankalia, op. cit., p. 159, fig. 70.

[279] Ibid.

[280] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, pl. XXXI, fig. 1.

[281] Ibid., pl. XXXI, fig. 2.

[282] Ibid., pl. XXX, fig. 1.

[283] Sankalia, H.D., op. cit., p. 160. The sculpture of *Navagrahas* from Tanjore has only 8 *grahas*. cf. Gangoly, O.C., *South Indian Bronzes*, pl. LXXXI.

[284] Banerjea, *D.H.I.*, p. XXIV, fig. 2, p. 442; Bidyabinod, B.B., *J.A.S.B.*, 1909, pp. 391-92, pl. XXX. Sharma, B.N., Revanta in Literature and Art, *Purāṇa*, XIII, No. 2, pp. 133–150.

Thus the solar iconography of north India broadly confirms the literary traditions of the Sun-cult as depicted in the Vedic, the Epic and the Purāṇic records and other Indian texts.

The Sun-temples:

Architecture is intimately connected with sculpture.[285] While a piece of sculpture might be the creation of an individual's taste and interest the temple demonstrates the will of the community thereby showing the religious condition of the period. The temples represent in concrete form the prevailing religious consciousness of the people.[286]

Antiquity of Sun-temples:

There was no scope for a temple in the solar religion of the Vedic tradition as it centred round the worship of the atmospheric form of the Sun by means of oblations and libations in the sacred fire. Naturally the Vedic literature is conspicuous by the absence of references to any temple in the proper sense of the term. But terms indicative of the temple start occurring in the Grihyasūtras[287] which show that by the 5th-4th centuries B.C. the tradition of temples had been evolved in the Hindu society. The cult of *bhakti* which inundated India after the 5th-4th centuries B.C. was responsible for the adoption of the temple-tradition.[288] As regards the Sun-cult we do not find any reference to a temple of the Sun in the orthodox literature before the 5th-6th cent. A.D. For the first time there are references to a temple of the Sun established by Sāmba at Mūlasthāna (modern Multan) in the *Sāmba, Bhaviṣya* and many other later Purāṇas.[289] The Magas are said in this legend to have built a city known as Mūlasthāna on the banks of Candrabhāgā in Punjab and a Sun-temple there containing an image of that deity. This historic temple of the Sun was visited by Hiuen Tsiang,[290] as well as by Alberuni, Al Edrisi, Abu Ishak al Ishtakhri and several others.[291] These Purāṇas refer to other temples at Koṇārk and Kālapriya established by the Magas.[292] Many Gupta inscriptions also refer to Sun-temples.[293] Thus by the Gupta period the temple-tradition came to be incorporated in the Sun-cult by the orthodox Hindus also. But it appears that the tradition of temple for the Sun-god had come into existence much earlier among the masses under the combined impact of the Hellenised Mithraism and indigenous traditions.

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[285] Saraswati, S.K., *Early Sculpture of Bengal*, p. 6.

[286] Brown, P., *Indian Architecture*, p. 1.

[287] *S.G.S.*, II.12.6; *K.G.S.*, II.7.21; *P.G.S.*, III.14.8.

[288] *A.I.U.*, p. 361.

[289] Hazra, *Studies*, vol. I, p. 40.

The temple of Multan may have been built in the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa period (2nd cent. B.C.—2nd cent. A.D.). The Lālā Bhagat pillar (2nd cent. A.D.) which is solar in nature appears to have been a part of a vanished temple.[294] The temple of Jandial at Taxila (2nd cent. B.C.)[295] appears to have been associated with the worship of fire and Sun of Mithraic tradition.[296] If the testimony of Philostratos and Plutarch is to be believed there may have been Sun-temples in the kingdom of Porus[297] on the eve of Alexander's invasion (4th cent. B.C.). In view of these evidences it may be suggested that the tradition of temple for the Sun-god may be as old as the 4th cent. B.C. and like other temples they were made of perishable materials in the Maurya-Śuṅga period. It is only from the Gupta period onwards that they came to be built in bricks and stones. That is why we start getting archaeological evidences of Sun-temples from the Gupta period onwards.[298]

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[290] Beal, Samuel, *Buddhist Records of the Western World,* vol. II, pp. 274—75.

[291] Elliot and Dowson, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 18—73.

[292] *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa,* I.129.100.

[293] Fleet, *C.I.O.,* vol. III, pp. 70, 80, 162, 218.

[294] *D.H.I.,* pp. 105-6.

[295] Brown, P., op. cit., p. 33.

[296] Marshall, *Guide to Taxila.*

[297] Cunningham, *The Coins of the Śakas,* p. 22 ff.

[298] The Gop-temple of the Sun-god has been dated in the 5th cent. A.D.—a date which is confirmed by a radio-carbon test. See *The Struggle for Empire,* p. 696, fn. 77.

Sun-temples in the inscriptions:

In view of the fact that the practice of establishing temples for the Sun was started by the Śākadvīpī Brāhmaṇas who settled in western India, it is no wonder that most of the Sun-temples particularly of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods should belong to this region. The Gupta epigraphic records[299] testify to the existence of many Sun-temples. The Mandasor inscription of the time of Kumārgupta I refers to the construction of a Sun-temple by a guild of weavers in 436 A.D. at Daśapur (Malwa, M.P.) and its repair in 473 A.D. The Indor copper plate records the endowment of Devaviṣṇu in 465 A.D. for the regular lighting of a lamp in a Sun-temple at Indor (Bulandsahar, U.P.). There is another grant dated 511 A.D. which refers to another Sun-temple. The Gwalior inscription of the 15th year of Mihirakula records the erection of another temple at Gopādri (Gwalior State) by Mātriceta. The Deo-Barṇārka inscription of the time of Jīvitagupta II, a later Gupta king, refers to the existence of a Sun-temple about 25 miles south-west of Arrah in Shahabad district of Bihar. Unfortunately none of these have been found.

There is a reference to a gift by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Govindarāja to the temple of the Sun (Jayāditya) at Kāvi.[300] There are many Sun-temples of mediaeval times (7th—12th cent. A.D.) in western India[301] such as at Visāvāda, Kinderkheda, Modhera, Somanāthapattana, Thān, Sutrapādā, Pasthar, Bhīmanāth and Bhagvadar. There are other Sun-temples either found or referred to in Rajasthan, Kashmir, Orissa, Punjab and western U.P. For instance, there are Sun-temples in Rajasthan[302] at Dholpur (9th cent. A.D.), at Osia (10th cent. A.D.), at Sirohi and Bharatpur in old Jodhpur. Towards the close of the early mediaeval period the Sun-temple in the Khajurāho[303] group reared its head.

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[299] See Fleet, *C.I.I.*, vol. III, pp. 70, 80, 162, 218.

[300] Majumdar, R.C. (ed.), *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, p. 332.

[301] Cousens, H., op. cit., pp. 28, 37, 41, 44, 46, 71.

[302] Sharma, D. *Rajasthan Through the Ages*, pp. 327, 720.

[303] Brown, P., op. cit., p. 112.

In central India there are two famous Sun-temples of early mediaeval period—one at Mankherā (District Tikamgarh) built by the Pratihāras[304] and the other at Khajurāho (Citragupta Temple) built by the Chandelas.[305] But there are other temples which may be ascribed to Sūrya. In eastern India several Sun-temples have been discovered. The Sun-temples in ruins have been discovered in Orissa also such as at Khiching and Koṇārk.[306] In south India the Sun-temple is a rarity.[307] In South India the only temple thus far known to be dedicated to the Sun and his attendant planets exclusively is one at Sūryanārkoyil in Tanjore district. On the epigraphical ground its period may be fixed between 1080—1118 A.D.—the reign of Kulottuṅga Coladeva. It was known as Kulottuṅga Cola Mārtaṅḍālaya.[308] It appears that the Durgā-temple at Aihole[309] (Mysore), Lād Khān temple[310] and the Pāpanātha temple at Paṭṭadakal[311] were associated with Sun-worship at a slightly earlier date. The rarity of the Sun-temples in south India specially in view of abundant Sun-temples in north India may be explained on the ground that south India remained uninfluenced by the Magian tradition which has been actually responsible for the initiation and popularisation of the tradition of Sun-temples.

Some Extant Temples of the Sun:

A few typical Sun-temples may be examined here. The temple of the Sun at Mārtaṅḍa (Pl. 28a) in Kashmir was erected about the middle of the eighth century A.D. by Lalitāditya (724—760 A.D.)—the most powerful sovereign of Kashmir. It became virtually the model and ideal for all subsequent Brāhmaṇical temples in Kashmir.[312] It is the finest and most typical example of the Kashmīrī style.[313] It occupies a superb site five miles from the ancient town of Anantnāga. It stands on a high plateau from where a most extensive view of the valley is obtained. In its background there are mountains which meet the heavens. In its front there is a great valley full of Sun-shine and greenery.[314] Nothing could have been better for a Sun-temple than this site where the elements of heaven, earth and water meet as at Koṇārk. Percy Brown's excellant account of this temple may be summarised here to give some idea of its constituents. Its design consisted of a comprehensive central structure including the sanctuary standing within a rectangular courtyard surrounded by a cellular peristyle which is entered by an imposing gate-way. It is interesting to note that the tradition of an imposing gate-way in a temple may also be seen in a few Brahmāṇical temples of south-east Asia.[315] In one respect it is not in accordance with the Kashmirian type as in front of the central building there is a detached portico with two chambers in each of its wings. It may be suggested that the additional compartments were specifically provided for the accommodation and performance of some ceremonial connected with the Sun-cult. Even with this supplementary formation the whole scheme is simple. But 'it is the skilful manner in which all its parts are adjusted and treated that gives this temple its supreme aesthetic and architectural character.'[316] In the central building itself the outstanding features are the great trefoil arched recesses under their angular pediments, one of these occupying each face and separated by a massive pilaster at each angle. The entire composition is raised on a high plinth and is terminated above by a pyramidal roof. According to Fergusson[317] it had a wooden roof. Suitably devised and boldly shaped mouldings are provided to give emphasis. There are carvings in high relief in niches in accordance with the practices of the Sun-cult and needs of the architecture. They give a rare richness to the architecture. The trefoils are not true arches. Of the same character though similar in its proportion, was the gateway to the temple, a substantial portal sufficiently large in size to balance the main shrine of which it was replica in appearance. It contained an inner and outer compartment with the door-way in between. A pyramidal roof was provided surmounting the whole structure. There are carvings on its surfaces. The lighter pillared arcade of the enclosure wall is in contrast with the massive volume of the central building and the gate-way. Outwardly it looks like a well-balanced composition. The temple of Mārtaṅḍa attracts attention on account of its unique features. It is suggested that there is something un-Indian rather European in its appearance. Its pillars, the treatment of wall-surface, and the elevation of its super-structure[318] emphasise the un-Indian appearance. The use of capitals of quasi-Doric order on the pillars shows Hellenistic influence. It is no surprise if the Jandial temple at Taxila may have provided the source in India for this feature as in the latter also such columns and capitals were employed under the Hellenistic influence.[319] Another peculiarity with this temple like other Kashmir temples lies in the fact that the ceiling of the roof takes the form of a lantern formed by overlapping intersecting squares.[320] The structural principle provided 'for an upward tendencies in the lines and masses of the central building, areas of lateral space in its surrounding courtyard, equilibrium by the introduction of the gateway and rhythm in the regular inter-columniation of the encircling peristyle.' In spite of its impression of largeness, it is of modest dimensions.[321]

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[304] Deva, K., *Ancient India,* 15, p. 44.

[305] Vidya Prakash, *Khajuraho,* p. 13.

[306] Mitra, R.L., *Antiquities of Orissa,* vol. II, p. 148.

[307] Sastri, H.K., op. cit., p. 235.

[308] Rao, T.A.G., op. cit., pp. 299—300.

[309] Cousens, H., Ancient Temples of Aihole, *A.S.I.A.R.,* 1907—8.

[310] Gupte, R.S., *The Art and Architecture of Aihole,* p. 22.

[311] Majumdar, R.C. (ed.), *The Age of Imperial Kanauj,* p. 333.

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[312] Brown, Percy, *Indian Architecture,* p. 158, pl. CXXXVI, fig. 1. See, Naravane, V.S., Mārtaṇḍa, the Crowning Phase of Ancient Kashmir Architecture, *Kashmir,* V. No. 5, 1955, pp. 107–9.

[313] *H.I.E.A.,* vol. I, p. 259.

[314] Rowland, B., *The Art and Architecture of India,* p. 111.

[315] Majumdar, R.C., *Hindu Colonies in the Far East,* pp. 172-73, 214.

[316] Brown, op. cit., p. 158.

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[317] *H.I.E.A.*, vol. I, p. 261.

[318] Saraswati, S.K., *The Struggle for Empire,* p. 635, *H.I.I.A.*, p 143; Rowland, op. cit., p. 112.

[319] Brown, P., op. cit., pp. 33-34.

[320] *The Struggle for Empire,* p. 635.

On plane the central structure occupies a rectangle, 62 feet long and 35 feet wide, the projecting wing of the portico extends the width at the front to 56 feet. The cella in the interior of main shrine is oblong of 18½ feet by 14 feet placed transversely while the entire height of this central building was in the vicinity of 70 feet. The quadrangle measures 220 feet long by 142 feet broad. The pillars facing this enclosure are 84 in number, each 9½ feet in height with a space between of 6¼ feet at the base. Thus the structure was of very small dimensions, yet it gives an appearance of largeness and massiveness. Its simple dignity and solid nature of its masonry reminds us Roman amphitheatres. As pointed out by Brown, "In its prime in the eighth century few spectacles can have been more enchanting than Lalitāditya's gray stone masterpiece, with its bold trefoil arches, stupendous walls and elegant arcades, symmetrically elevated against its mountain background, and looking out on the solitary splendour of the everlasting snows." Even in its now ruined state the Mārtaṅḍa temple is by far the most imposing,[322] in size and situation, of all the Kashmir temples between 750—1200 A.D.

The temple at Gop (Kathiawar) (Pl. 28b) is taken by scholars[323] as a Sun-temple. In our present state of knowledge the view seems probable because it resembles other Sun-temples of this region. It may be dated in the 5th-6th cent. A.D.[324] It consists of a square shrine surrounded by a double courtyard and roofed by a peculiar *śikhara*. The shrine is 10′—9″ square inside, about 23′ high, with walls 2′ thick. The shrine seems to face east. The roof of the temple was constructed on the corbel principle, the interior being hallow, on the outside the *śikhara* rises in tiers as a stepped pyramid but it is distinctly cut off into three divisions. The lowest division has two *caitya* windows on each of its face; the upper has one above it the apex is crowned by a single stone. On two grounds, firstly, the arrangement of roof and secondly, the presence of niches on the outside wall of the inner courtyard it is alleged that the style of the Mārtaṅḍa temple of Kashmir might have influenced it through ancestors of Mers.[325] But no theory says that Mers came to Kathiawad via Kashmir. Moreover it is not certain that the Mers originally hailed from Kashmir. There is a sort of chronological improbability in the view because none of the Kashmir temples of the type with which similarities are suggested can be dated earlier than the 8th cent. A.D. while this temple belongs to the 6th cent. A.D. Sankalia[326] suggested that the so-called Kashmirian features might have been due to the impact of the style of the 'angular roofed *vihāra* of Gāndhāra'. Both, Kashmir and Kathiawad, might have common source of influence with the Gāndhāra style through Sind. But the fundamentals of the design and composition of the Gop temple have no parallels in the Gāndhāra monuments. On the other hand the peculiar features like the storeyed and stepped arrangement which are supposed to be Kashmirian features are seen in the Gupta temples. Therefore, the Gop type may have been a natural evolution from the Gupta tradition of temples.[327] The Mandasor inscription[328] shows that there had been frequent contacts between the Sun-worshippers of Kathiawad and those of Central India. This must have helped in the impact of Gupta tradition on Kathiawad architecture.

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[321] Smith, V.A., *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, p. 45.

[322] Basham, A.L., *The Wonder That was India*, p. 355.

[323] Burgess, J., *Report on the Antiquities of Kathiawad and Kach*, p. 7; *H.I.I.A.*, p. 82; Sankalia, H.D., *A.G.*, p. 59. This date is confirmed by a radio-carbon test. See, *The Struggle for Empire*, pp. 696, fn. 77.

[324] Coomaraswamy, A.K., op. cit., p. 143.

The pre-Chālukyan Sun-temples of western India are of one type and may be placed as follows:[329]

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[325] Cousens, H., op. cit., p. 6. Coomaraswamy, *H.I.I.A.*, p. 82; Brown, P., op. cit., p. 159.

[326] Sankalia, H.D., op. cit., p. 39.

[327] *The Struggle for Empire*, p. 584.

[328] *C.I.I.*, III, p. 83.

[329] Sankalia, H.D., op. cit., p. 60.

Group I

1. Visāvāda.
2. Sutrapādā, Thān—At Thān there are Sun-temples of the pre-Chālukyan and the Chālukyan periods both.

Group II

1. Kinderkheda.
2. Pasthar.

The temples of the first group have been placed in the 7th or 8th century A.D. while the second group has been dated in the 10th century A.D. In each case a square shrine is placed among two courtyards, inner and outer, either square or rectangular. The walls of the courtyard at Visāvāda are no more extant. At Sutrapādā they are severely plain. At Thān there is a possibility of their existence. The shrine walls are simple even without a niche except at Thān. In the latter the whole basement consists of three mouldings, the highest moulding is called *Kalaśa* torus. The actual wall of the shrine has three niches decorated with *caitya* window ornament rising like a stepped pyramid. The cornice is ornamented with bell and festoons. In wall mouldings it resembles with the Modhera temple. They have got *Śikharas* at Visāvāda but have four steps instead of three as at Gop and the apex is crowned by an *āmalaka* and a *kalaśa*. Pillars have not been preserved except at Kinderkheda and Sutrapādā. Pillars consist of square massive shafts without any base. Kinderkheda and Pasthar stand for a slightly different style of '*Śikhara*'.[330]

There are many temples of the Sun of the Chālukyan period—at Modhera,[331] Hiraṇya, Somanātha and Thān (950 A.D.—1300 A.D.). The Sun-temple at Modhera dated 11th cent. A.D.[332] consists of the shrine proper (*Gar-*

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[330] Burgess, J., *A.K.K.*, p. 186.

[331] Bharucha, S., The Sun-Temple at Modhera, *Mārg*, vol. V, No. I; Brown, P., op. cit., pls. CV, CVI, CVII.

[332] Sankalia, H.D., op. cit., p. 84,

bhagriha), a hall (*Gūḍhamaṅḍapa*), an outer hall (*Sabhāmaṅḍapa*) and a *Kuṅḍa* (now called *Rāmakuṅḍa* but actually it is a *Sūrya-Kuṅḍa*). In spite of its lost tower, damaged pillared hall and decayed surroundings the Modhera temple is still a monument of incomparable beauty. The temple is confronted with a Sun-pool for ablutions. On the western side of this ornamental tank wide flight of steps ascends through an exquisitly carved and flutted archway or *toraṇa* to the main entrance of the temple. This building was elevated on a broad terrace constructed of solid bricks faced with stones which formed an imposing courtyard around it. The temple itself is resolved into two separate structures connected by a narrow passage and a pillard hall (*Sabhāmaṅḍapa*) which is a rectangular building having two compartments—(a) *Gūḍhamaṅḍapa* and (b) *Garbhamaṅḍapa.* The composition is so well harmonised that it gives impression of wholeness and unity. The roof was in the shape of a low stepped pyramid. The pillars are 13 feet high. The essential parts of the Modhera temple are contained in the enclosed structure. The plan externally is that of an oblong formation with an extreme length of 80 feet and a width of 50 feet. The sole entrance is through a pillard portico on the east. It faces the east. The Modhera temple (Pl. 29a) impresses a visitor by its treatment and its proportion as a whole and the entire composition is 'lit with the living inspiration and an atmosphere of spiritual grace'[333]. The Sun-temple on the Hiraṇya river resembles in plan the *Garbhamaṅḍapa* and *Gūḍhamaṅḍapa* of Modhera temple. It has no *Sabhāmaṅḍapa.* It may be dated in the 11th century A.D. The other Sun-temples such as that of Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa at Somanātha and the Sun-temple at Thān are of the 14th century A.D. and follows the Modhera style.

The temple of Koṇārk in Orissa is 'the most exquisite memorial of Sun-worship'.[334] On account of its architectural and sculptural beauties it has evoked unstinted appreciation right from the 16th cent. A.D. (only two centuries after its construction) to the present day. Even unsympathetic and harsh critics of Indian art[335] have all praise for the 'most richly ornamented building'[336] which is the 'grandest achievement of the Eastern School of architecture'[337] and which is 'one of the noblest monuments of Indian Mediaeval art.'[338] This Sun-temple is famous on account of the great imaginative design to which the temple is built, the happy integration of architecture and sculpture into one artistic whole, the excellent carvings and the bold and lovely sculptures of different varieties.

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[333] Brown, Percy, op. cit., p. 120.

[334] Hunter, W.W., *A History of Orissa,* vol. I, p. 126.

In the later chapters of the *Sāmba Purāṇa*[339] Sāmba, the son of Krisṇa, is said to be the builder of the Sun-temple of Koṇārk. In history Narsiṁha I[340] of the Eastern Gaṅga dynasty is the builder of this magnificient temple of the Sun. Generally it is believed that the temple was built around the middle of the 13th cent. A.D.[341] but Fergusson[342] on the basis of Abul Fazl's statement and stylistic grounds regards it as a 9th century monument. The view of Fergusson cannot be upheld as there are loopholes in its grounds. Firstly, Abul Fazl's statement is contradictory as it places Narsimha I and '730 years ago' in one and the same sentence. Obviously there appears to be a calligraphic error of placing 730 for 330. Moreover, Fergusson's argument that it is not possible to revert to such a beautiful style as is seen in the Koṇārk after the erection of such a degraded art as that of the temple of Purī, is not based on any solid ground. There is always a chance of improvement in style. If Koṇārk temple is an improvement on that of Purī that is no ground for giving it an earlier date. The association of the Sāmba-legend with Koṇārk occurs in such sections of the Purāṇa literature which can be dated between 1250—1500 A.D. Therefore, it is clear that the Sun-temple of Koṇārk which was built under the Magian impact could not have been built much earlier than the middle of the 13th cent. A.D. There is such a marked advancement in the unity of architecture and sculpture in this temple that it cannot belong to such an early date as the 9th cent. A.D. Mitra[343] suggests that the place was famous as a centre of Sun-worship from earlier times and it is no surprise that the present temple is built on an older foundation but in the absence of excavation at the foundation level no reliance can be given on this suggestion. The present temple is a 13th cent. monument as is evidenced by copper plate inscriptions as well as by the style of the temple.

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[335] As early as 1580 A.D. Abul Fazl in his *Āini-Akbari* wrote that even those whose judgment is critical and who are difficult to please at stand astonished at its sight.

[336] Fergusson, J., *Picturesque Illustrations of Ancient Architecture in Hindustan,* London, 1948, pp. 27-28.

[337] Brown, P., *Indian Architecture,* p. 106.

[338] Coomaraswamy, A.K., Four Days in Orissa, *Modern Review,* April, 1911, pp. 345—50.

[339] Chs. 42-43; Hazra, *Studies,* pp. 105, 108; *Brahma P.,* 28—32.

[340] Stirling, A., *An Account, Statistical and Historical of Orissa Proper, Koṇārak,* 1825, pp. 164—76. Hunter, op. cit., p. 126. Coomaraswamy, A.K., *M.R.,* April 1911, pp. 345—50; Kramrisch, S., *Indian Sculpture,* pp. 113—14; P. Brown, op. cit., p. 106; Saraswati, S.K., *The Struggle For Empire,* p. 551; Rowland, B., *The Art and Architecture of India,* p. 161. Gangoly, O.C. & Chowdhury, S., *Koṇārak,* pp. 1-2. Ebersole, R., *Black Pagoda,* p. 64.

[341] Mitra, R.L., *Antiquities of Orissa,* vol. II, p. 156 ascribes it to Narasimha, II (1278 A.D.).

[342] Fergusson, J., *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture,* vol. 2, p. 106.

According to legends the Sun-temple at Koṇārk was constructed by Narsiṁha I to get himself cured of leprosy. In history Narsiṁha I appears to have built it to memorise his victories over far and wide regions.[344] The Sun-god in his chariot is the conqueror of the whole universe. Percy Brown offers another explanation for the building of this temple at Koṇārk. According to him[345] this temple was erected on such a remote site in order that the practices of the *maithuna* movement so wantonly illustrated might be ceremoniously conducted by its addicts in an under-world of their own.

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[343] Mitra, R.L., op. cit., p. 250.

[344] Lal, K., *Miracle of Koṇārak,* pp. 14–24.

[345] Brown, op. cit., p. 108.

The Sun-temple at Koṇārk represents the apogee of the north Indian variety (*Nāgara*) of temples. As pointed out by Brown,[346] 'it represents the crystallised and accumulated experience of several hundred years of this type of temple building, so that no longer is it a fortuitous range of separate structures, as in the Liṅgarāja and Jagannātha examples, but a reasoned and systematic coordination of its parts into an architectural unity. The Temple of the Sun at Koṇārak therefore illustrates in every aspect the fulfilment and finality of the style'. The site of Koṇārk where the sea, the sky and the earth meet in a majestic way and where the Sun sends its first golden rays and also salutes the landscape with its setting rays was very much suited for a Sun-temple. The master-builders of this Black Pagoda built this temple after a bold and imaginative conception of its design (Pl. 29b). In the Vedic and Purāṇic traditions the Sun-god is depicted as riding on Time's chariot drawn by seven horses with which he traverses through the heavens.[347] It is tempting to suggest that the name Koṇārk was derived from Kronos, the Mithraic Sun-god representing Time.[348] Though there is similarity in name as well as the ideology of the Koṇārk temple and the name and nature of Kronos it should not be forgotten that the concept of the Sun as Time was developed in India also from Rigvedic times. The architects translated this spirited allegory into a temple-form. The building was fashioned like a *ratha* or wheeled chariot being drawn away by the seven horses of the Sun. 'Nothing could be more befitting for a temple for the Sun than this allegorical representation of the Sun-god riding on his chariot across the sky.[349] It is significant to note that the chariot is constructed as distinctly of the Sun-god. There are twelve wheels on either side which symbolise the year's dark fortnight and the bright ones. There are eight thick and eight thin wheel spokes in each wheel which represent the traditional Hindu divisions of the day and night. The seven horses which are yoked to the chariot stand for the seven days of the week. The uniqueness of this temple lies in the fact that the temple presents an obvious look of a Sun-temple on account of its specific design of a solar chariot. Percy Brown has given a good account of the principal components of the temple which may be summarised as follows.

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[346] Brown, op. cit., p. 107.

[347] *R.V.*, I.115; see, *V.M.*, pp. 30-31; *Viṣṇu P.*, II.2.2–7, 10.1; *Vāyu P.*, I.89-90; *Brahmāṇḍa P.*, 1.1.82-83; *Matsya P.*, 126.9.

[348] Frank Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra,* p. 108.

[349] Lal, K., *Miracles of Koṇārak,* p. 33.

The base of the temple is an immense terrace with 12 giant wheels[350] each nearly ten feet high fixed on either side, to stimulate the vehicle of the god and the front is a wide flight of steps, its sides supported by seven richly caparisoned horses rearing and straining in their harness as they strive to drag its great bulk along. On the platform thus built the temple building was raised into two conjoined parts consisting of a large hall or *jagamohana,* 100 feet wide and 100 feet high and a still larger tower (*deul*) rising as high as 225 feet from the ground. At the base of this tower three subsidiary shrines were made with outer staircase leading up to specious recesses each containing a life sized but minutely carved statue of Sūrya. To complete the scheme facing the main flight of steps the *nāṭamandira* was constructed as a detached structure square in plan and with a pyramidal roof. The whole is on a high plinth. There are a number of artistic and structural accessories such as a free-standing pillar, a refectory, several supplementary shrines and separate groups of statuary—all enclosed within a courtyard, 865 feet by 540 feet having entrance gateways in three of its sides. In the typical Orissan style the *jagamohana* and *deul* have been put together in a single unit. They are *pañcaratha* in plan. There is an improvement from the typical Orissan architecture in this temple in the sense that the *nāṭamaṅḍapa* and the *bhogamaṅḍapa* have been constructed as detached buildings. In the words of S. K. Saraswati[351] 'their character and location not only proclaim a correct sense of grouping and architectural application, but also a reasoned co-ordination of all into a pleasing unified scheme'.

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[350] Brown, Percy, op. cit, 107 ff; pl. LXXXIX.

[351] Saraswati, S.K., *The Struggle for Empire,* p. 552.

Another improvement may be seen in the form of the design of the roof of the *jagamohana*. Though it is similar to that of the Liṅgarāja temple of Bhubaneswar but in one respect it is different as it is divided here into three storeys instead of two. As remarked by Fergusson,[352] 'there is no roof in India where the same play of light and shade is obtained with an equal amount of richness and constructive propriety'.

The *jagamohana* or assembly hall consists of two main elements-cubical portion (*bada*) and its pyramidal roof structure (*pīḍhā*). There are three doorways but the eastern which is the main doorway is a noble conception. The imposing appearance has been obtained by the treatment of pyramidal roof.[353] The *Śikhara* has disappeared. The ruined glory and variety of it cannot be concealed.[354]

The temple of Koṇārk is equally a miracle of sculpture. There is a happy blending of sculpture and architecture into one organic whole. Art critics[355] have praised this or that sculpture of the temple.[356] Some praise the statues of the gods, others have appreciation for the figures of women, for *mithunas,* for the horses, elephants, lions soldiers as well as flowerscrolls and geometric designs.

It is a trite truism to say that the temple of Koṇārk is famous for its erotic sculptures. It surpasses even Khajurāho sculptures in this respect. Much has been written with a view to explaining the meaning and purpose of this feature on Koṇārk temple as well as on other mediaeval temples of India.[357] To us it appears that this feature was engrafted on the Sun-temples particularly to emphasise the fertilising and creative power of the Sun.[358] Moreover the temple was a sort of the universe in miniature,—the microcosm of the macrocosm. Therefore, everything which is found in the universe is to be depicted on the walls of the temple. In the case of the Sun-temple of Koṇārk there is an added reason for this feature because the Sun-god is conceived as traversing the whole universe seeing everything below—good and bad both. The erotic sculptures also found a place on account of the design of the temple. But the creative role of the Sun which was well recognized in the ancient world[359] was the most befitting reason for the depiction of *mithuna* scenes on Sun-temples. The Citragupta temple at Khajurāho is a Sun-temple of Central Indian variety. Generally the Khajurāho temples have been dated between 950—1050 A.D.[360] but S. K. Saraswati would like to place them in the second half of the 11th cent. A.D.[361] The Sun-temple of Citragupta belongs to that group of Central Indian temples which have *aṅga śikharas* and transcepts around the sanctum cella. The temple complex consists of the sanctum (*garbhagriha*), *antarāla,* the *maṅḍapa* and the *ardhmaṅḍapa* with a projected portico—all on same axis and raised on a masonary terrace (*adhiṣṭhāna*). The Citragupta temple at Khajurāho is very elegantly proportioned in plan and execution. It follows in design the other temples of this group.[362]

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[352] *H.I.E.A.*, vol. II, p. 107.

[353] Coomaraswamy, *H.I.I.A.*, p. 116.

[354] Mitra, R.L., *Antiquities of Orissa,* vol. II, p. 148.

[355] Kramrisch, S., *The Art of India,* p. 44.

[356] Lal, K., op. cit., pp. 38–50.

The earliest extant Sun-temples in Rajasthan have been found at Osia (Jodhpur) and Chittorgarh (Kālikā

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[357] Fouchet, *Erotic Sculptures of India,* p. 63, Lal, K., op. cit., pp. 58—74.

[358] Coomaraswamy, A.K., Four Days in Orissa, *Modern Review,* April 1911, pp. 345—50.

[359] Coomaraswamy, A.K., The Sun-Kiss, *J.A.O.S.,* vol. 60, pp. 46—67.

[360] Brown, P., op. cit., p. 112; *H.I.E.A.,* II, p. 141; *H.I.I.A.,* 109.

[361] *The Struggle For Empire,* pp. 564-65.

[362] Brown, P., op. cit., p. 112.

Mātā temple now a days). They may be dated towards the 8th–9th cent. A.D. There existed a Sun-temple at Ahar (near Udaipur) and Nandesena (near Gogunda) during the mediaeval period.[363]

A Sun-temple, elegant and graceful but restrained in its treatment hails from Osia (10th cent. A.D., Jodhpur).[364] Much of its effects have been obtained by the original design of its frontage to which two tail flutted pillars have been added. This temple is of the *pañcāyatana* type, its four subsidiary shrines being connected by a cloister which not only provided shelter for the devotees but also served the purpose of an enclosure-wall. In its proportions and style this building (Pl. 30a) displays no little dignity while both in the shape of its *śikhara* and in its manner of pillar-ornamentation it is excellent. In its architecture and in its art it is an illustration of the supreme genius of Osia artists.

In 1956 a Sun-temple built in white stone, situated near Tusa (16 miles from Udaipur city) was discovered.[365] It has been dated in the 11th–12th cent. A.D., though no inscription was found in this temple. It consists (Pl. 30b) of a *sabhāmaṅḍapa* and *garbhagriha* like the Modhera Sun-temple of the western India of the same period. Like other Sun-temples it also faces east. The exterior of the shrine in contrast to the simplicity of the exterior of the *sabhāmaṅḍapa* is full of sculptural reliefs mainly of female figures, guardians of quarters and Sūrya sculptures. There is utter absence of any prominent image of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva on the exterior. The main back niches of the sanctum are projected of the main body of the temple, each measuring 34 inches in height and contains an image of Sūrya seated above the *saptaratha* pedestal in imitation of the earlier traditions. They face west, north and south. Each of these Sūrya-images are flanked by *Surasundarī* figures on both the sides. There are two standing Sun-images on the portions facing north and south in company of female figures. The number of *Surasundarīs* is 10 in all. It is significant to point out that only one image of the Sun in seated posture appears on the back portion. Here there is chain and leaf motif in the row in difference with the *ardhakamala* motif of the Osian Sun-temple. The southern extrior of the shrine contains four statues of the females, a seated Sun and a standing Yama with a buffalo etc. Its opposite contains equal number of Sūrya images and guardians of directions. The *Śikhara* may be 20 feet in height. The interior of the *Sabhāmaṅḍapa* is covered by a doom like roof supported by 16 round and simple pillars. The Sun-temple of Tusa is significant from many points of view i.e. it does not contain any composite figure, it has no inscription and the Sun-images are both of the seated and standing types. The existence of Sun-temples in this region of India reveals that besides western India, Rajasthan also must have been a prominent centre of the Sun-cult in ancient times. There are many other Sun-temples in Rajasthan such as at Ahar, Thamvala, Bhinmāl, Bamnera etc.[366]

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[363] *The Struggle For Empire*, p. 327.

[364] Brown, P., op. cit., pl. XCVII.

[365] Agarwala, R.C., A Newly Discovered Sun-Temple at Tusa, *Bhāratīya Vidyā*, vol. XXIII, Nos. 1–4, 1963, pp. 56–58.

Thus there are certain common characteristics of the Sun-temples, of course there are minor variations in details. The Sun-temples face towards east. The roof of the Sun-temple is generally of the shape of stepped pyramids. They give an impression of massiveness and largeness, though are of moderate dimensions. The *śikhara* is generally found. They have usually *pradakṣinā-mārga*. The Sūrya figures are generally standing along with other figures such as of Viṣṇu etc. It is interesting to note that in spite of the Magian influence on the Sun-cult there is no Irānian influence visible in any of the Sun-temples. But there had been Hellenistic impact on some Sun-temples as of Mārtaṅḍa. But generally they are in perfect keeping with the art traditions of India. The Magian tradition failed to exert any influence on the technique and tradition of the Sun-temples in India.

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[366] Sharma, D., *Rajasthan Through the Ages*, p. 381 ff., 721 ff.

CHAPTER VII

EPILOGUE

A.[1] S. Geden[2] long ago wrote—'solar worship has been described as the real religion of India. Nor is it difficult to understand how in a land flooded with Sunshine, where every face and function of life is dependent upon the kindly warmth of the Sun and his destructive energy and power are felt in the uttermost extremes of heat, it should have been man's primary business to win his favour and placate his wrath'. The foregoing sourcewise treatment of the Sun-cult fully endorses the statement of Geden as solar religion is one of those rare faiths of India which had its beginnings in the earliest stages of man's existence and had continued in some form or the other to hold ground throughout India's history. It has the unique distinction of attracting the attention of simpleton primitive communities as well as of the complex civilized societies of India. On one hand it had a wide following among the crude and simple agricultural peoples on account of its beneficial impact on the aggrarian life, on the other hand it had endeared itself to the highly developed intellectual classes on account of its effulgent glory which was taken as the best manifestation of the Supreme Being. It entered into the palaces of the kings, courts of the ministers, the temples of the Brāhmaṇas, the shops of the businessmen, the huts of the farmers and the camps of nomads. Like its rays the Sun reached every nook and corner of India. Further it is one of those unique beliefs of India which had been backed by a very simple philosophy of 'the unseen through the seen' which could be understood by any common man. The strength and greatness of the Sun-cult lies in this continuity, universality and simplicity. The vitality of the Sun-cult can be realised from the fact that solar elements have entered into many cults of Hinduism and the Sun was accepted as one of the five constituent deities of the *pañcāyatana pūjā* in early mediaeval India. Its onward march did not have a halt even with the end of the Hindu period. On the other hand it had its followers in the mediaeval and modern India too.[3] Even at present the general worship of the Sun is continued to be adhered to by the Hindus in daily life and on ceremonial occasions the Sun-god never fails to have obesiance from the common man. Thus the saga of Sun-worship in India is as old as the Indian history itself and like the Indian culture it has a longevity and continuity which is the ideal and despair of many cults and creeds of India.

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[1] References to original sources have not been given here, as this chapter contains conclusions based on data already discussed and referred to in the preceding chapters. (II—VI) and Appendix—A.

[2] The Sun, *E.R.E.*, vol. XII, p. 83.

HISTORICAL SURVEY

Origin and Antiquity:

The origin of this impressive saga of Sun-worship is shrouded in obscurity. Previously it was believed that it had its beginnings in the *Rigveda,* but recent discoveries in the field of prehistoric archaeology have opened new vista of its origin. It may be suggested that the Sun as an object of worship attracted the attention of mankind in the Neolithic period in India as is the case with Europe also. The farming economy appears to have played leading role in the origin of Sun-worship. The Sun was a god of the farmers more than that of the hunters. The worship of the Sun was based upon the concept of the natural phenomenon as the source of light, warmth and fertility. The deep sense of reverence for its beneficial qualities led to its representation in symbolic forms on prehistoric and protohistoric objects.

The atmospheric aspect of the Sun-god appears to have been at the back of its worship in this infant age. No human representation of the Sun has been traced so far on any prehistoric and protohistoric object which clearly shows that the protohistoric man in India has not advanced beyond the naturalistic concept of Sun-worship. Many primitive tribes of India worshipped the Sun-god as the highest. In spite of such thoughts the fact appears to be that the spiritual and metaphysical element was subordinated to the materialistic and physical elements in its worship in this infant stage of its history. In the protohistoric cultures of India the Neolithic tradition of Sun-worship was continued as is evident from numerous representations of the Sun-god on seals, sealings, potteries etc. Its worship remained symbolic and atmospheric. The concept of a solar world to which the soul of man repairs after death also appears to have dawned in this age. In view of the fact that only symbolical representations of this god have been found while human representations of other gods like prototype Śiva and Mother-goddess have been recovered from protohistoric objects, it is suggested that the naturalistic concept of the Sun-god continued to dominate the field. The geographical extent of Sun-worship in the protohistoric period appears to have covered the whole of northern India as solar symbols have been recovered from protohistoric objects from almost all the states of northern India. It extended to southern India too as is evident from such symbols on objects of south Indian sites of protohistoric period. The question of foreign influence on Sun-worship in the protohistoric period of India cannot be answered with dogmatic certainty in view of the scarcity of evidence. It is well known that in Egypt and Mesopotamia at this time there had been a vigorous tradition of Sun-worship. The protohistoric India had cultural contacts with these countries. In view of these it is quite tempting to suggest[4] that Sun-worship in the protohistoric period was influenced by the traditions of Sun-worship of Mesopotamia and Egypt. But the suggestion is not supported by evidences. The astral religion did not play that leading role in protohistoric India as it did in Egypt and Babylonia. It is almost certain that the cults of protohistoric

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[3] Akbar was taught Sun-worship by a Jain. See *Prabandha Cintāmaṇi,* p. 82. cf. Sharma, D., *Early Chauhan Dynasties,* p. 235 fn. 86.
Wilson, H.H., *Religious Sects of the Hindus,* p. 148.

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[4] Cf. Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, pp. 26, 54.

Śiva and Mother-goddess played more prominent roles than the Sun in the Harappa culture.[5] The Sun-symbols in India have been traced from a period earlier than that of Egypt and Babylonia and those very symbols are continued on the protohistoric objects. No direct borrowing from Egypt or Babylonia is traceable in Sun-worship of the Vedic period succeeding Harappa culture. Therefore it is suggested that there may not have been any direct borrowing of solar tradition in protohistoric India from these countries.

The worship of the Sun in this period was general, not sectarian and there is no evidence of any image or public building for the worship of the Sun-god. In view of uncertain decipherment of the Harappa script it is not possible to throw intensive light on the ideas of Sun-worship in this age.

Early Vedic Period (1500 *B.C.*–1000 *B.C.*):

The advent of the Āryans in India in about 1600 B.C.–1500 B.C.[6] marks the introduction of a new tradition of Sun-worship in northern India. This new tradition in its earlier phase is enshrined in the *Rigveda* which may profitably be compared with the *Avesta* and the remnants of Āryan beliefs among the Indo-European races. The Indo-Āryan tradition of Sun-worship as preserved in the *Rigveda* is the continuation of the Indo-European and Indo-Irānian streams of Sun-worship. But the indigenous stream of Sun-worship also appears to have been mixed up in the Vedic tradition. In our present state of knowledge it is difficult to separate the Āryan from the non-Āryan traits of Sun-worship in the Rigvedic age. In a general way it can be said that the *Rigveda* contains non-Āryan thoughts also.

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[5] Gordon, D.H., *The Pre-Historic Background of Indian Culture,* pp. 68-69.

[6] The date for the overthrow of the Harappa Culture and the invasion both of which coincided cannot be fixed with mathematical precision. These events may have occurred anywhere between 1750 B.C. and 1400 B.C. cf. Allchin, B. & F., *The Birth of Indian Civilization,* p. 144–156, Keith, *R.P.V.U.,* pp. 3–7.

The symbolic worship of the Sun-god in the *Rigveda* may have been influenced by the indigenous tradition. In the early Vedic period the impact of indigenous tradition is less perceptible than what it is in the later Vedic period.

In Sun-worship of the early Vedic age there are two concepts of the Sun-god which have been simultaneously developed. The atmospheric aspect of the Sun-god has been emphasised quite frequently in the *Rigveda*. The worship of the Sun-god centres round the natural phenomenon whose glories as day-maker, producer of light and warmth and the creator of fertility and plants have been sung in the *Rigveda*. Side by side this naturalistic concept, the spiritual and moral concept of the god was also developed as early as the *Rigveda*. The concept of the Sun as a god is more prominent than its being simply a luminary. The Sun-god is a great moral and ethical force in the Nature. He is the remover of evil influences and curer of diseases. He is the protector par-excellence. He is essentially a benevolent god. His greatness is so varied and many sided that several gods were developed out of his different aspects and qualities. Sūrya, Mitra, Pūṣan Viṣṇu, Savitri, Vivasvat and Aśvins and Ādityas came to be invoked as representing different aspects of the Sun. This concept of the Sun as a god led the Vedic seers to assign him anthropomorphic traits. There was a great hovering between the natural and human in this age, consequently there is arrested anthropomorphism in the age as the physical phenomenon is ever present before the seers.

The concept of the Sun-god has advanced beyond the materialistic stage in the early Vedic age. The Sun is the soul of all moveable and immoveable things in the universe. He is the highest metaphysical principle in the universe. The trend towards the spiritulisation of his personality has already begun in the early Vedic age. The concept of many from one and vice versa in the case of Sun-worship led to a sort of 'solar monotheism' in this age which was handicapped by the ideas of 'solar polytheism'.

The worship of the Sun was in the nature of the *yajña* as it involved recitation of Vedic *mantras* of praise and prayer, and offering of oblations and libations. There is no exclusiveness in the worship. It is non-sectarian and domestic in nature. There are certain seers who are particularly associated with Sun-worship. Some of these appear to have inherited this tradition from their father as their names imply.

There appears to have been various categories of Sun-worshippers. One category comprised of those who worshipped him in his natural form, others consisted of those who adored him by means of symbols and fetishes. There was another category which worshipped him as the highest metaphysical principle by meditation and other yogic practices. In spite of anthropomorphic traits the iconic tradition and public worship by means of temples could not be developed in this age.

Later Vedic Age (10*th cent. B.C.—*6*th cent B.C.*):

The later Vedic age (10th cent. B.C.—6th cent. B.C.)[7] continued the worship of the atmospheric Sun under various names and aspects. The later Saṁhitās, the Brāhmaṇas, the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads provide us with ample materials for the history of Sun-worship in this age. The earliest series of punchmarked coins and pottery designs on Painted Greyware may also be assigned to this age.

One of the most significant developments in Sun-worship in the later Vedic age is its complete ritualization and spiritualization. In the later Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas the Sun-god came to be identified with various rituals and their different components. There is no independent status of the Sun-god outside the Vedic rituals. The natural basis which was a marked characteristic of the Rig-vedic Sun-worship recedes in the background. The best evidence of the trend may be found in the increased importance of various solar symbols as fetishes in several Vedic rites in this age. The trend of regarding the Sun-god as the highest metaphysical principle which was initiated in the *Rigveda* is continued with more vigour and conviction in the Upaniṣads where the concept of a *Puruṣa* in the Sun has been forcefully developed. The Sun has been identified with *prāṇa, ātmā,* Brahma, Prajāpati etc. thereby showing the spiritualisation of his personality.

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[7] Renou, L., *Vediç India,* p. 25.

The descent of the Āryans into the sweltering plains of the Gangetic Doab led to the development of the malevolent side of the Sun-god in this age. In the *Atharvaveda* and the Brāhmaṇas there are several references to the scorching heat and rays of the Sun. But the benevolent side was not forgotten. It is evident from the fact that Sun-worship was specially prescribed for the cure of diseases—a feature which was only hinted at in the early Vedic age. This curative aspect of Sun-worship was fully developed in the later Vedic age. In the *Atharvaveda* the rising Sun is prayed to remove the sore diseases, internal malady, heart-break, jaundice and other diseases. In the Brāhmaṇas the healing quality of the Sun-god is given an increased emphasis and the cure of eye-diseases is specially connected with Sun-worship. Once it is said in the *Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa* that leprosy may be caused in the absence of Sūrya. This reference foreshadows the Purāṇic trend of worshipping the Sun-god for the cure of leprosy.

In the later Vedic age the fertility aspect of Sun-worship was given an increased emphasis. In the *Atharvaveda* as well as in the Brāhmaṇas all the solar gods have been associated with fertility, productivity and procreation. This increased importance of the fertility aspect appears to have been due to the mixing of popular elements in the later Vedic age. In the *Rigveda* this aspect appears to have been concealed as is clear from the slight with which the epithet *Śipiviṣṭa* applied to Viṣṇu is uttered in the *Rigveda.*

Āditya came to be a general name of the Sun and the number of Ādityas swelled to twelve. These twelve Ādityas came to be identified with the twelve months of the year. The identification of the Sun-god with the Time is a marked feature of Sun-worship of this period.

The aniconic tradition of the *Rigveda* is continued in the later Vedic age also but employment of symbols as Sun-fetishes in Vedic rituals shows that the tradition of Sun-worship has advanced a step forward from the purely aniconic tradition to the semi-iconic stage as these *vimbas* served as temporary images of the Sun in unconventional sense. A definite procedure involving *japa, arghya, ācamana, prāṇāyāma, mārjana* and the yogic practices etc. came to be developed in the later Vedic age as is evident from *Kauṣītaki* and *Maitrī* Upaniṣads. The concept of the worship of the Sun at different periods of the day on the basis of solar movement also came to be developed in this age. The influence of astronomy of the age may be seen in such developments.

The popularity of Sun-worship can be realised from the fact that in many sacrifices mentioned in the Brāhmaṇas the Sun-gods figure prominently and solar fetishes are employed in various sacrifices as is evidenced by the Brāhmaṇas and the *Atharvaveda*. Many Brāhmaṇic rites may be regarded as 'solar charms'. Even in the philosophical speculation of the age the Sun was regarded as the best manifestation of the supreme reality and in certain circles as that of Bhāradvāja the Sun-god was regarded as the highest reality. There are references to the supremacy of the solar gods many times in the later Vedic age. The case of Rohita and Sūrya as *Brahman* in the *Atharvaveda* exemplifies this tendency. There are ample references to the supremacy of the Sun-gods in the Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads. This may have given inspiration to solar sectarians of later times. The Sun-god figured prominently in the magical and medicinal traditions of the later Vedic age as is evidenced by the *Atharvaveda*. Thus Sun-worship appears to have been a popular creed in its non-sectarian and aniconic forms.

There were many saints and personalities of this age who may have been particularly associated with Sun-worship such as Bhāradvāja, Gārgya, Kauṣītaki, Ghora Aṅgirasa and Brihadratha as mentioned in the Upaniṣads. Most of these appear to have been representatives of the populace but aristocracy also appears to have been associated with the creed as the case of king Brihadratha shows. Thus the later Vedic age witnessed important developments in the growth of the Sun-cult.

The Post-Vedic Age (*6th cent. B.C.–2nd cent. B.C.*):

The post-Vedic age witnessed revolutionary changes in the religious values and traditions. The post-Upaniṣadic religious thought was marked by a return of the personal and concrete from the impersonal and abstract of the Upaniṣads. In keeping with the changed atmosphere of the times the Sun-cult also underwent vital changes in its concept of the god and also its ritual. The most significant development in Sun-worship of the period under review lies in its march towards sectarianism and classical ideals in marked contrast to the non-exclusive and naturalistic tradition of the Vedic times. There is directly a reference to a Sun-sect in the *Mahābhārata.* Besides, there are other indirect references to sectarian Sun-worship as is indicated by the emergence of a secret Veda of the Sun-worshippers and the presence of exclusive Sun-worshippers (*Sūryabhaktas*) and the identification of the Sun-god with all the principal gods of the times in the Epics. The *Āditya-hridya* hymn of the *Rāmāyaṇa* fully endorses the view that there was a Sun-sect in the period under review. The existence of a Sun-sect at this time is indirectly corroborated by the early Buddhist and Jain literatures and by Pāṇini and Patañjali.

There appears to have been three factors responsible for the evolution of the Sun-sect. Firstly, the resurgence of non-Āryan indigenous traditions had leading role to play in the development of sects and sectarian ideologies. The growth of the *bhakti* movement in the post-Vedic period had completely transformed the religious world of Hinduism and Buddhism both. The ideals of the *bhakti* came to dominate the Sun-cult also. The evolution of a sect round Sūrya was in response to this movement. Secondly, Viṣṇu, the Sun-god of the Vedic tradition had started mixing with many extra-solar cults such as of Vāsudeva, Kriṣṇa and Nārāyaṇa[8] in the post-Vedic period. His solar basis under these new influences receded in the background. Naturally there arose a necessity for a sect of pure Sun-god. Thirdly, the cause of solar sect must have gained momentum by the influx of the Sun-worshipping Maga priests in India in the wake of the Achaemenian invasion and the popularisation of the tradition of temples and images.

In our present state of knowledge the date for the origin of the Sun-sect cannot be fixed with absolute certainity. It is more than probable that it originated as early as two-three centuries before the Christian era as the evidences of the Epic data, Pāṇini, Patañjali, early Buddhist and Jain literatures combined with that of early images and coins reveal. The antiquity of the Sun-sect may be pushed back to the 5th-4th cent. B.C. which is the upper limit of the *Mahābhārata* and which may be the time of Pāṇini also. If the view that the first wave of the Magas entered into India in the wake of the Achaemenian invasion is accepted this date appears to be quite reasonable.

The Sun-sect appears to have been ideologically connected with the Vedic thoughts as the Sun-worshippers are said in the *Mahābhārata* to have been expert in the Vedic lore. There is no appreciable impact of the Magian tradition on the Epic Sun-sect. Only the Magian name—Mihira has been adopted. This sect does not appear to have been a popular creed as it goes unnoticed by the Greek writers and Kautilya.

Second important development in Sun-worship of the period lies in the fact that there is humanisation of the Sun. The Sun-god becomes quite human in dress, talk and action. There are several references to the appearance of the Sun-god in human form in the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*. The depiction of the Sun in human form on Maurya and Śuṅga terracottas and on Bhārhut medallion and on Avantī coins provides archaeological evidences for this new development. In keeping with this feature there is a development of a family round the Sun-god. Several attendants of the god have also been referred to.

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[8] Bhandarkar, *V.S.M.R.S.*, pp. 30–38.

The post-Vedic age witnessed the advent of the Maga priests from Irān in the wake of the Achaemenian invasion of north-western India. The old view[9] that they came in the early centuries of the Christian era in the wake of the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa invasions cannot be accepted in view of recent excavations in Pakistan and fresh interpretations of literary data. It is suggested that the Magas—the Irānian Sun-worshipping priests entered into India in several waves. The probability of at least three waves of the Maga's immigration into India is strongly suggested. It appears that for the first time the Maga priests entered into India in the wake of the Achaemenian invasion of the 5th century B.C. They remained confined to the north-western portions of India in the beginning. Their traditions of the Sun-cult could not make much headway for a few centuries after their first appearance on the Indian soil. If there was any impact of it on the Indian tradition of the Sun-cult at this stage it was only in the adoption of the Mithraic name—Mihira in the solar pantheon of India. After the inclusion of north-western region in the Mauryan empire they may have spread to northern regions. The second wave of the Maga's immigration into India came in the wake of the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa invaders in the 2nd cent. B.C.—1st cent. A.D. This appears to have been a much more powerful wave than the previous one. It exerted powerful influence on the indigenous Sun-cult and spread in western regions also. The impact of Mithraic traditions may be seen on certain coin-devices of the Pañcāla-Mitras, and Vaṭāśvakas. The Kuṣāṇa coins also contain anthropomorphic representation of Mihira with Miiro inscription on it. The Bhārhut Sun-bust represents the second stage of Mihira's representation as was the tradition in Mithraism. Like Mithraism the progress—pattern in the representation of the Sun-god in Indian Sun-cult has been from symbolic representation to bust-depiction which ultimately led to full human representation under the Hellenistic impact. The Irānian features in the Sun-images of the Kuṣāṇa periods onwards bear out the truth of the suggestion that the second wave exerted powerful influence. But the Magas and the Magian traditions were not accepted by the orthodox Hindu society before the 5th cent. A.D. The third wave appears to have reached India in the 7th cent. A.D. which led to the division of the Irānian priests into two classes of the Magas and the Yājakas.

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[9] Bhandarkar, *V.S.M.R.S.*, p. 153.

There are significant developments in the ritual of the Sun-cult also. The beginnings of the Purāṇic *pūjā* may be traced in the ritual of the age. There are references to the employment of flowers, garlands, incense, lamp etc. in the worship of the Sun-god. But there is no evidence of image-worship upto 2nd cent. B.C. The pūjā was offered to the atmospheric Sun-god and his symbols.

It appears that the Sun-cult was popular among lower and higher classes of Indian society as well as among the convert-foreigners. Royal patronage was available to solar sectarians as is evident from the facts that there had been 1008 Sun-worshippers in the camp of the Pāṇḍus and Saṁvaraṇa—the mythical Kuru king also was a great devotee of the Sun. Yudhiṣṭhira—the famous hero of the *Mahābhārata* was a great devotee of the Sun. Rāma, the hero of *Rāmāyaṇa* defeated Rāvaṇa only after repeating the *Āditya-hridaya* hymn. Puṣyamitra, the Śuṅga ruler, has been taken by many as a Sun-worshipper. The Pañcāla-Mitra dynasty has clear solar associations. Of the foreigners the Śakas, the Indo-Greeks and the Kuṣāṇas were inclined to solar religion. Some Śātavāhana rulers may have been Sun-worshippers. The *cāraṇas*, and the *yakṣas* are also said to be the Sun-worshippers. Many saints and yogis were found worshipping the Sun on the banks of Mandākīnī in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Thus the Sun-cult had a wide social circle.

The geographical extention of the Sun-cult appears to be whole of northern India as solar symbols have been found on coins from northwestern, northern, western and eastern India.

The Kuṣāṇa-Gupta Period (*2nd cent. B.C.—6th cent. A.D.*):

The Sun-cult witnessed important developments in the age of the foreign invasions. The presence of Magian priests and the Hellenistic influences in India at this time led to the adoption of iconic tradition by the solar sectarians. No doubt, the Indian tradition was also feeling the want of this popular practice in their religion of the Sun as other sectarians had adopted it much earlier. Under these circumstances there had been evolution of the Sun-images. The Hellenistic impact on earliest series of the Sun-images may be seen in the four horsed chariot motif and general execution while the Indian influence may be seen in the shape and form of the chariot and attendant deities like Uṣā and Pratyuṣā.

In the second stage of its development, the Sun-images show Irānian features like northerner's dress, high boots and a girdle round the waist. But gradually there is idealisation and nationalisation of the Sun-images in the early Gupta age. The employment of lotus clearly reflect this trend. In the Kuṣāṇa period the Sun-images were of two types—seated and *bhadrāsana*. In addition to these two varieties the Gupta age witnessed the evolution of a new variety—the standing type of the Sun-images.

The Sun-cult of the period[10] may be regarded as an amalgam of different traditions of the past. On the one hand the Vedic tradition of Sun-worship continued to be adhered to, on the other hand the popular tradition of theistic Sun-cult also exerted its influence. In addition to these, there had been the Irānian tradition of the Sun-cult which also contributed its share. The Gupta period in its characteristic way of accommodation and synthesis evolved a neo Sun-cult which imbibed within itself all these trends in such a manner that it looked as if there is no sharp break with the past while in reality it was a revolution without calamity because the revolutionary forces were accepted with grace thinking that they were inevitable, failure to recognize which would have meant a natural death. The Vedas are held in honour by the Sun-worshippers in the early Purāṇas. The simple non-sectarian Sun-worship is continued in the Sūtras and the Smritis. The atmospheric aspect of the Sun was emphasised when he is described as the chief of the planets in the early Purāṇas. The symbolic worship of the Sun of the Vedic tradition was continued in this age as is evidenced by solar symbols on coins and references to them in the early Purāṇas. The recitation of the Vedic *mantras,* throwing of oblations in the fire and *arghya* constituted the main elements of Sun-worship in the Smritis. The theistic sectarian tradition first initiated in the Epics is also continued side by side the Vedic tradition in this period. There are many descriptions of the Sun-cult in the early Purāṇas and inscriptions of the Gupta period which smack of a full fledged sectarianism The Irānian tradition of Sun-worship also played significant part in this period as will be evident by an analysis of Irānian features in solar iconography. Towards the end of this period the Magas were recognized by the orthodox society.

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[10] Srivastava, V.C., Some Aspects of Sun-worship in the Gupta Age, *University of Allahabad Studies,* Vol. 2, (N.S.) No. 5, Sept. 1970, pp. 369—394.

There are new trends in Sun-worship of the period. There is an exclusive emphasis on the benevolent aspect of the Sun-god. It is in harmony with the ideal of *bhakti* of the times. The twelve Ādityas came to be regular Sun-gods. Mārtaṅḍa is openly recognized as a name of the Sun.

The religious movement definitely swings forward from the abstract to the concrete in this period. The atmospheric Sun-god recedes in the background and a human Sun-god with a well-developed family and attendant comes into the forefront. The worship of the Sun by means of icons came to supercede symbolic form. The domestic worship of the Sun is replaced by public worship in temples. Towards the end of this period solar vows also came to be developed.

The syncretic tendency may also be seen in the Sun-cult of the period as there are identifications between Sūrya and Śiva and Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Sūrya are considered to be '*abheda*'.

As regards the sociological aspect the Sun-cult had a wide following. The Brāhmaṇas of orthodox Vedic tradition, the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas are associated with the Sun-cult. The *Siddhas,* the *Kinnaras,* the *Gandharvas, Rākṣasas, Yātudhānas* are said to be adherents of the Sun-cult. Thus both the Āryans and non-Āryans were connected with it. The foreigners like the Kuṣāṇas, the Irānian Magas and the Huṇas were connected with the Sun-cult. It appears that royal patronage was available to the Sun-cult. Mihira is one of the deities adored by Kaniṣka. The Sālankāyana dynasty had some affiliation with Sun-worship as is evident from the legend '*citrarathasvāmin*' in their inscriptions. The Maitrakas of Vallabhi had also leanings towards this cult. The Huṇa rulers—Mihirakula and Tormāṇa were also attached to it. Many business communities played great role in the perpetuation of endowments to the Sun-temples.

The solar cult spread throughout northern India as is evident by the finds of solar images from Afghanisthan, Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Central India and Western India. As compared to Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism it occupied a subordinate position and was regarded as a minor cult.

Thus the period of the Kuṣāṇas witnessed a challenge posed by the Magian tradition to the Sun-cult. The Gupta period presented the response to that challenge by its assimilation, synthesis and absorption of the divergent traditions of the Sun-cult. It was for the succeeding ages to reap the fruits of that timely response which gave a new life and vigour to the Sun-cult resulting into the emergence of a full bloom of that cult in the early mediaeval period.

The Early Mediaeval Age (*7th cent. A.D.—12th cent. A.D.*):

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the period from the seventh century A.D. to the end of the Hindu period (12th—13th centuries A.D.) was the richest period of the Sun-cult in ancient India. The late Purāṇas and the upa-Purāṇas such as the *Bhaviṣya, Brahma, Skanda, Varāha, Garuḍa, Viṣṇudharmottara, Bhaviṣyottara, Sāmba* and *Kālikā* throw flood of light on the Sun-cult of the early mediaeval period. The literary works as of Mānatuṅga, Mayūra, Bhavabhūti, Amarasiṁha, Saṁkaracārya, Ānandgiri, and many other[11] also contain references to Sun-worship. The literary data is supplemented by the post-Harṣa epigraphy, Sun-images and temples.

The early mediaeval period witnessed the official recognition of the Magian tradition by the orthodox Hindu society. Under the impact of this tradition the Sun-cult flourished with renewed vigour and attained climax during this period. The very fact that the orthodox religious literature as the Purāṇas and upa-Puraṇas came to incorporate their account by this time is a proof of the accommodation of this class among the orthodox circles. Moreover, the legend about the advent of the Magas is associated with Vāsudeva, Kriṣṇa, Sāmba, Dwārkā etc. in these works which show the anxiety of the orthodox circle to accommodate them. Further, efforts are made through legends to give national garb to Irānian features of the Sun-images. Moreover, in the images of the period indigenous features have been employed with elaboration to overshadow the foreign traits. In some images of Bengal the indigenous iconographical tradition of the Sun as found in south India have come to dominate. In certain works the Magas have been given equal status with the Brāhmaṇas. In spite of such efforts the Magian influence is visible as it is specifically mentioned in the late Purāṇas that the Sun was particularly worshipped in his twelfth form, i.e. Mitra. Further, the tradition of worshipping the Sun-god by means of images in temples is on definite increase as is clear from unusually large number of Sun-images and temples of the period.

The concept of the Sun-god is essentially human and sectarian. The naturalistic tradition in the Sun-cult is a thing of the past now. Sun-worship develops all the characteristic features of a sect such as a sectarian literature, a band of devoted followers, a fixed code of conduct (*sadācāra*) for its adherents, an exclusive priesthood etc.

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[11] Bhandarkar, *V.S.M.R.S.*, pp. 153-54

Royal patronage was available to the Sun-cult as is evidenced by the iconography, temples, epigraphy and literature of the period. The Vardhana dynasty of Thāneśwar was a great devotee of the Sun as is evident by the epithet *Paramādityabhaktaḥ* applied to three ancestors of Harṣa in the Sonepat copper plate inscription. Though Harṣa himself was a Śaiva and later on inclined towards Buddhism, he did not foresake his ancestral deity as in the quinquennial assembly attended by Hiuen-Tsiang the image of the Sun-god was installed along with Buddha and Śiva. That Sun-worship was a popular cult in the 7th century A.D. is attested by the statement of Hiuen-Tsiang that many thousands visited the Sun-temple of Multan annually. Its popularity at this time is vouchsafed by the secular literature also as Mayūra, the contemporary of Harṣa and Bāṇa, has praised the Sun-god in the sectarian fashion for the cure of leprosy in his *Sūryaśataka*. Its popularity was not confined to Brāhmaṇic poets and writers but was also prevalent among non-Brāhmaṇic circles also as Mānatuṅga, the Jain poet of the 7th century A.D., also praised the Sun-god in his *Bhaktamārastotra*. The Sun-god continued to be popular in the post-Harṣa period as is evidenced by the Shahpur and Deo-Barṇārk inscription of later Gupta kings. The Pratihāra kings, Rāmbhadra and Vināyakapāla, appear to have been Sun-worshippers as their tutelary deity was Āditya.

Many Chauhan rulers[12] also patronised the Sun-worship in Rajasthan. Chaṅḍamahāsena may be regarded as a Sun-worshipper. The Indrarāja Chāhamāna, a feudatory of Mahendrapala II showed his patronage of the Sun-cult by the erection of a Sun-temple named after himself as *'Indrādityadeva'* at Ghoṇṭavarsika in 942 A.D. Alhana and Kīrtipāla of Nāḍol and Jālor respectively also showed their leanings to the Sun-god though they were great worshippers of Śiva. The Sanigara Chauhans of Jalor made benefactions to the temple of the Sun-god named Jagatsvāmin at Bhinmāl. Siṁharāja of Jaṅgaladeśa (a branch of the Chauhan dynasty) was also a patron of the Sun-god as he gave some benefactions to the Sun-temple named Raṇṇāditya. Mahārāja Sāmantasiṁha of Mewar also appears to have sympathised, if not patronised, the cause of the Sun-cult as a Sūrya-temple from Bamnera may be assigned to his reign period on the epigraphical evidence. The Parmāra ruler, Vikramasiṁha renovated a Sun-temple at Varman in 1299 A.D. The Gāhaḍavāla rulers were also sympathetic to the cause of the solar cult. The king Jayachanda gifted many villages to the Sun-god name Lollārka. An inscription of Yakṣapāla,[13] a local king of Gayā begins with an invocation to the Sun-god. There are many other cases of the royal patronage of the Sun-cult as the kings of the early Gurjara dynasty, such as Dadda I, Dadda II, and Raṇagraha were Sun-worshippers as is attested by the epigraphy. The Valabhī rulers of Kathiawar and Allaśakti of the Sendraka dynasty of Gujarat also patronised the Sun-cult as informed by their inscriptions. Though the Chālukyas do not seem to have been Sun-worshippers, there are stray references to a few kings and ministers of this dynasty who donated for the Sun-temples. The plates of Balavarman and Avantivarman II refer to the gifts by these two Chālukya rulers in 893 and 899 A.D. respectively to the temple of the Sun named 'Taruṇāditya. If the testimony of the *Saraswatī Purāṇa*[14] is to be believed, Mahārāja Siddharāja of the Chālukyas of Gujarat erected a Sun-temple called 'Bhayalaswāmī. The leaning of Vastupāla, the famous Jain-minister, to the Sun-cult is attested by the Ganesar inscription. Vikala, a Jain in the reign of Rāmadeva added a maṇḍapa to the Sun-temple at Cambay. The Kalachuris of Ratanpur also seem to have been Sun-worshippers as Amodā plates and other inscriptions of this dynasty reveal. The king Lalitāditya of Kashmir (8th century A.D.) also showed his allegiance to the Sun-cult by building the famous Mārtaṇḍa temple in Kashmir. The Rāṣṭrakūta king, Govindarāja, also made a gift to the temple of the Sun at Kāvi as is evident by the

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[12] See Sharma, D., *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 235, and *Rajasthan Through the Ages*, p. 383, 721.

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[13] Diwakar, R.R. *Bihar Through the Ages*, p. 335.

[14] Quoted by Majumdar, A.K., *The Chalukyas of Gujarat* p. 299.

Kāvi grant. In an inscription of Bengal Keśavasena and Viśvarūpasena are said to be *Paramasaura*. The Eastern Gaṅgas of Orissa (12-13th century A.D.) also patronised the solar cult as the Sun-temple of Koṇārk was built during their regime. Thus throughout the period under review royal patronage was available to the Sun-cult from different quarters of northern India.

The Sun-cult was popular not only among the royal and courtly classes but also among general masses of the Indian society as Hiuen-Tsiang clearly stated that people visited the Sun-temple of Multan in large numbers. The shrine at Bhinmāl was also visited by numerous devotees from various parts of India. The temple at Bhinmāl continued to be popular in the thirteenth century as well because in 1262 A.D. two brothers belonging to the Mathura Kāyastha community gave an endowment for the maintenance of the employees of the temple of the Sun according to Hunḍa inscription. The same inscription records the second donation. The Vaiśyas continued to keep interest in the Sun-cult. The large number of Sun-images and temples found all over India is also indicative of popular support. The popularity of Sun-worship may be realised from the fact that even non-Brāhmaṇas were the Sun-worshippers. The Magas and the Bhojakas later on degraded as the Yājakas, Aṅgirasas of Orissa and Ācāryas of Bengal were special Sun-priests.

The Sun-cult flourished throughout northern India as is evident from the epigraphy, iconography, temples and literature. That north-western and western India was its stronghold is indicated beyond doubt as largest number of Sun-temples has been found from this region and there is a continuous history of the prevalence of the Sun-cult in his region under the patronage of the Maitrakas, Gurjaras, Sendrakas, Chālukyas, Kalachuris, etc. The Sun-temples have been found from Gop (6th cent. A.D.), Viśvavada, Sutrapādā and Thān (7-8th cent. A.D.), Kinderkheda, Pasthar (10th century A.D.), Modhera, Hiraṇya, Somanātha and Thān (950 A.D.–1300 A.D.)—all in Gujarat-Kathiawar region. In this very region the existence of a Sun-temple in V.S. 1354 is shown by the Murlīdhar inscription. Further the Sūrya reliefs from Thān, Sidhapur, Dhanb, Somanātha, Lambojī-mātā and other places testify to the prevalence of Sun-worship in the Gujarat-Kathiawar region from the 7th century A.D. to 13th century A.D. Further, the late Purāṇas as the *Bhaviṣya* and Upa-Purāṇas as the *Sāmba* connect the legend of Sāmba with the region of Gujarat. The other regions of western India as Rajasthan and Punjab were also under strong impact of the Sun-cult. Multan in Punjab continued to be a stronghold of the Sun-cult as is evidenced by Hiuen-Tsiang, Alberuni, Arab writers and later Purāṇas. It was one of the three important centres of Sun-worship. In Rajasthan a number of Sun-temples of this period has been discovered such as at Osia, Chittorgarh, Dholpur, Sirohi, Bharatpur, Ahar, Nandesaina and Tusa. Sun-worship was so popular in Rajasthan during the period from 600 to 1400 A.D. that according to G. H. Ojha[15] there is no village of the period in the Sirohi state which has not either some Sun-temple or some broken images of the Sun-god. Many temples of the Sun-god of the 13th century A.D. have been found in Rajasthan which show the popularity of the cult in this region in the last period of the Hindu rule. Some important temples were of Bamnera, Varman, Pindwara, Rohera, Vasantgarh, Nitora, Talwara, Chincha, Rankapura, Ram Sainya and Pālī[16]. A large number of Sūrya images has been found from the region-Kirādu, Tusa, Osia, Beda Pokaran, Bithu, Pālī, Bahara and many are in Rajkot museum and Rajputana museum at Ajmer, That the Sun-cult was well established in the early mediaeval period in Kashmir is well attested by the Mārtaṇḍa temple of Kashmir (8th cent. A.D.).

The geographical extension of Sun-worship was not confined to western and north-western India. It spread to the Gangetic Doab, Central India and Eastern India as well. The prevalence of the Sun-cult in Central India is attested by the epigraphy, monuments, images and literature. Varāhamihira, a resident of Avanti (Central India) himself was a follower of the Magian Sun-worship. The testimony of Bhavabhūti (8th cent. A.D.) is also relevant for central India as he himself is connected with Central India and the scene of the *Mālatī-Mādhava* is laid in Ujjayinī. This work contains a prayer in the beginning to the rising Sun. It is probable that Kālapriya of the Purāṇas may be identical with Kālapriyanātha at whose fairs all the three plays of Bhavabhūti were staged or it may be identical with Mahākāla of Ujjayinī. This was the second important place of Sun-worship. A few Sūrya images of the period such as from Bangon (Bundelkhand) and Khajurāho have also been found from Central India. The Varjramatha near Vidisā was an important centre of Sun-worship. In Uttar Pradesh and Bihar Sun-worship was prevalent as many kings of the region were Sun-worshippers. The Citragupta temple at Khajurāho (950-1200 A.D.) and Sun-images from this temple testify to the prevalence of the Sun-cult. Many images of the period from Mathura, Lucknow, Allahabad and Saranath museums are also available. The Shahpur and Deo Barṇārk (7th cent. A.D.) inscriptions reveal the extension of the Sun-cult to Bihar.

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[15] See Ojha, G.H., *History of Rajputana.*

[16] Sharma, D., *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, 235.

In Eastern India the popularity of the Sun-cult is attested by the large number of Sun-images as from Chanḍiamuda, Dinajpur, Manda, Dacca, Khiching and Koṇārk and many in Asutosh museum as well as by Sun-temples at Khiching and Koṇārk in eastern India. The later Purāṇas as the *Bhaviṣya* and Upa-Purāṇas as the *Sāmba* specially state that the region of Koṇārk in Orissa was the third important place of Sun-worship. The discovery of the image of Sūrya from a number of places in Bihar and the existence of the old Sun-temple at Kandahar (Saharsa) of Narsiṁhadeva's time (13th cent. A.D.) prove the existence of Sun-cult in Bihar. Thus the whole of northern India was under the impact of the Sun-cult. The testimony of *Yaśastilaka*[16] shows that Sun-worship of the northern type was

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16a. Handiqui, K.K., *Yaśas-tilaka and Indian Culture*, p. 323.

quite popular in the Deccan. It has been suggested[17] that "the new mode of Sun-worship might have reached even the extreme south of India" on the ground that the image of Sūrya brought by Sāmba floated from the Himālayas to Lavaṇodadhi. The Sun-worship crossed this limit also and reached Indonesia.

The Tāntric mode of worship which became a potent factor in the religious life of the period also influenced the growth of the Sun-cult definitely in the later stages of the period probably under the impact of the Pāla rulers of Bengal. The later portions of the *Sāmba Purāṇa* refer to Tāntric features in Sun-worship as *mudrās, nyāsas, abhicāras* and *bījas*. In spite of the adoption of such Tāntric practices Sun-worship appears to have been free from some fundamental concepts of Tāntricism such as the conception of a female principle who in association with a male principle, is responsible for the evolution of the universe. No such conception as the Prajñā of Tāntric Buddhism and Umā of Tāntric Hinduism could be evolved by the Solar sectarians. Thus only outwardly the Sun-cult was influenced by the Tāntric cult.

The spirit of compromise and synthesis is further elaborated during this period as can be seen in many unique figures of Sūrya with Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahmā etc. found from different quarters of India as at Lambojī Mātā, Dhilmal (Gujarat), Khetritank, Raṇapur, Kirādu, Harṣanātha and Jhalawar (Rajasthan), Somanātha, Khajurāho, Bangon etc. and many other figures from different regions where Trimūrti conception with Sūrya was developed. This is confirmed by the literature as the *Kūrma, Skanda* and *Garuḍa* Purāṇas state the identity of these gods. There are many historical instances of kings and their officials who showed religious eclecticism and spirit of mutual appreciation. Harṣa, for instance, worshipped the Sun-god along with Buddha and Śiva. Mādhava, the governor of the Śaiva ruler, Mahendrapāla of the Pratihāra dynasty granted a village for the repair of a temple of the Sun-god—Indrāditya-deva in the vicinity of a Śaiva temple. In the *Pañcāyatana pūjā* the Sun-god was one of the five constituent deities.

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[17] *Sharma, D., Rajasthan Through the Ages,* p. 386.

The Sun-god was worshipped under various names as Sūrya, Indrāditya, Bhāskara, Āditya, Cakraswāmī, Varuṇa-swāmī, Mārtaṇḍa, Lollārka, Jagatswāmin and Ratnāditya. The old associates of the Sun-god were retained but the cult of Ādityas, Navagrahas, Mātrikas and seven Risis came to be associated with the Sun-icons of the early mediaeval period as is revealed by the Trivikram image from Siwan, Kashipur temple relief at Khaithal in Kurukṣetra, the Khari (Bengal), Khiching, Kankandighi, Somanātha and Thān reliefs. Many of them are mere decorational pieces but others are cult-objects. Sun-worship was particularly popular in early mediaeval period for the cure of diseases. Sunday was sacred day for the Sun-god. At the time of solar eclipse provision for gifts had been made.

Another characteristic of the Sun-cult of the period was the development of a vast *Saura* literature as is evident by notices of such works in the digest literature. No doubt the *Mahābhārata* refers to a secret Veda of the Sun and in early Purāṇas also there are references to sectarian *Saura* literature but none of them has been found. The period under review must have produced a sectarian *Saura* literature as a *Sūrya Purāṇa, Sauradharma* and *Sauradharmottara* are mentioned in later literature.

That Sun-worship held important place in the religious scheme of early mediaeval India is indicated by the fact that in the Laṅkeśvara cave at Ellora Sūrya is sculptured among the major gods.[18] In Trimūrtis Sūrya as the principle god is not unknown as it is found in Gujarat and Rajasthan. The Sūrya image from Harṣanātha (Rajasthan) shows the Sun as the supreme deity. Sūrya replaces Brahmā in the trinity in an inscribed sculpture of Bengal. There are many composite images at Raṇapur which may be taken[19] as of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Sūrya thus showing that Śiva has been replaced by Sūrya. Sūrya replaces Viṣṇu in the door lintel of the tenth century Śiva-temple at Tejpur in Assam with Brahmā and Śiva on two sides. Śaṁkaracārya had to face the Sun-worshippers in the Deccan whom he found as divided into six sub-sects. Thus in some circles the Sun-god was worshipped as the major or important god. He is one of the five gods of *pañcopāsana* of early mediaeval times.

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[18] Majumdar, R.C., *The Age of Imperial Kanauj* p. 332.

The above review will leave no room for doubt that the Sun-cult was one of the most important cults of the early mediaeval period (700 A.D.—1300 A.D.) in northern India. But it is difficult to agree with the view[20] that the Sun-god "is next in popularity to that of Viṣṇu throughout northern India during the period under review." This conclusion cannot be upheld on the grounds of the epigraphy, temples, literary references and coins. Śaivism and Śāktism appear to have been much more popular than Sun-worship as they figure more frequently than this cult in the literature, inscriptions and coins of the period and the images and temples of the Śaiva gods are much more in number than those of the Sun-god.[21] It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that the Sun-cult was one of the popular creeds of Hinduism of the early mediaeval India though it could hardly attain supremacy. The reason for this extreme popularity of the Sun-god during the period lies in the fact that "whoever the Supreme Head worshipped be, it is easy to think of the Sun as his aspect, because as far as the earth is concerned. he is undoubtedly, the Sustainer, the Creator and perhaps also the Destroyer. So long with one's *'iṣṭa-deva'* one could worship also the Sun either identifying his own deity or regarding him as one of its most important aspects".[22] Sun-worship could not attain predominant position in ancient India due to many factors. Firstly, the visible nature of the deity prevented any mysticism and symbolism to be developed. Consequently he became popular universally due to simplicity of concept and beneficence but highest devotion could not be given to a phenomenon who was visible to the naked eye and no backing of high philosophy[23] unlike Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism, was available to him—a fact which is so essential for greatness in religious matters. Secondly, in the early mediaeval period the emphasis was given upon the '*ekāntika*' worship of the '*Iṣṭadeva*' due to monotheistic ideas reaching north from the south. No one who "believed in his *Iṣṭadeva* could not give the first position to a god liable to be identified with rival gods-Brahmā, Viṣṇu or Śiva'.[24]

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[19] Ojha, G.H., *History of Jodhpur,* I p. 66.

[20] Upadhyaya, V., *The Socio-Religious Condition of North India,* p. 255.

[21] Majumdar, R.C., *The Age of Imperial Kanauj,* p. 299.

[22] *Sharma, D., Rajasthan Through the Ages,* p. 720.

The above historical review reveals to us that the Sun-cult is one of those faiths of India which originated in prehistoric times and continued its existence throughout the ancient period after it was enriched by the Āryan tradition of Sun-worship and further revitalized by the Magian tradition. Besides the sectarian form, the general worship of the Sun remained a popular faith with the masses of India. The main reasons for its survival for such a long time may be found in the beneficent role of the Sun-god in everyday life, its obvious divine look visible daily to everyone, its easy identification with other gods due to its role of creation, sustenance and destruction combined in one and simplicity of concept. It has always been an object of veneration not only in India but all over the world. It is difficult to say whether the scientific basis of Sun-worship was ever realised by the devotees but it is not without significance to remind that the conception of *Hiraṇyagarbha* found as early as the *Rigveda* is similar in a general way to the present day scientific theory of 'nebula'. It is accepted even by scientists that the solar phenomenon is the original source of energy.[25] Even in the present atomic age the value of the solar phenomenon cannot be overemphasised. If the Sun remains as an object of worship in modern atomic age it would not be irrational and unscientific. Let science and religion meet in the Sun-cult and evolve a world of peace and prosperity.

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[23] Sharma, D., *Rajasthan Through the Ages*, p. 720.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 385, 721.

[25] See Jung Robert, *Brighter Than a Thousand Suns*, p. 11 ff.

APPENDIX A

THE EPIGRAPHIC DATA

The value of the epigraphic evidence for the political and cultural history of India cannot be overemphasised[1] specially in view of its contemporary, datable and non-interpolatory nature in marked contrast to the late, undatable, and interpolatory character of ancient Indian literature. Here an attempt has been made to examine the epigraphic data of northern India on the Sun-cult and to find out how far the literary data discussed in the preceding chapters are corroborated by this source.

In the inscriptions of Aśoka there are general references[2] to the sects and the gods and sometimes they refer specifically to particular religious orders such as the Ājīvikas and the Nirgranthas[3] but there is no reference to Sun-worship though the Svastika symbol figures on some of his inscriptions[4] which may have been either a general symbol for auspiciousness or a Pāli monogram[5] and may have nothing to do with the Sun-cult in his case as he was a Buddhist. With the exception of the legend *Miiro* in the inscriptions on the coins of the Kuṣāṇas,[6] there is no reference to the Sun-cult in the inscriptions of the Indo-Greeks, Kuṣāṇas and Kṣatrapas. If the reading of D. C.

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[1] Cf. Colebrooke, *Misc. Essays*, vol. II, p. 213. He opines, 'In the scarcity of authentic materials for the ancient and even for the modern history of the Hindu race, importance is justly attached to all genuine monuments and especially inscriptions on stone and metal'.

[2] Mookerji, R.K., *Aśoka*, pp. 110-12, 158-60. Cf. *R.E.*, XII, *M.R.E.* I.

[3] Ibid., p. 190. Cf. *R.E.*, VII.

[4] Ibid., p. 245, fn. 4.

[5] Deb, H.K., *J.A.S.B.*, vol. 17, p. 232.

[6] Gardner, P., *The Coins of the Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India*, pls. XXVI, fig. 3—10; XXVIII, figs. 2—4.

Sircar is correct, there is a reference to the salutation to the Moon and the Sun (*namo....Canḍasūrāṇāṁ*) in the Nānāghāt cave inscription of Sātavāhana queen—Nāyanikā.[7] With the exception of these two cryptic references to the Sun there is scarcely any reference to it in the early inscriptions of India upto the Gupta period.

Sun-worship in the Gupta Inscriptions:

We start getting ample references to the Sun-cult from the Gupta period onwards. In the Gupta inscriptions the earliest epigraphic testimony of Sun-worship is supplied by the Indor copper plate inscription of Skandagupta (465-66 A.D.) which has rightly been taken as 'an inscription of solar worship.'[8] The Sun-god is invoked under the name of Bhāskara as the rich source of rays and the piercer of darkness. Throughout the Vedic and Purāṇic literature[9] the role of the Sun-god as a day-maker and dispeller of darkness is lauded. It is interesting to note that the Sun-god in this inscription is prayed to protect mankind from mental and physical ailments. The idea is quite familiar one because the Sun-god has been praised in the literary traditions as a physician curing various physical diseases and internal maladies.[10] Moreover, Sun-worship under the name of Savitri[11] was regarded as giving peace of mind. Thus this description of the inscription confirms the view that Sun-worship was not only responsible for physical benefits but also for spiritual tranquillity. Further some sort of solar sectarianism is also envisaged in this inscription because it is specifically said that the Brāhmaṇas of enlightened mind worship him according to due rite and their praises are directed solely to him. (*'Viprāvidhivat=prabuddha-manaso'*). He is limitless and nobody, neither gods nor demons, can measure him. In this description three constituent elements of a sect are present viz., exclusiveness (*dhyān-aika-tānā* (*na*) *stuvaḥ*), fixed procedure (*vidhivat*), supremacy because he is above and beyond the gods and demons (*Yasya āntaṁ tridaśāsurā na vividur=nn =ordhvaṁ na tiryag-gatiḥ* [*ṁ*]). There is explicit mention of a Sun-temple at Indor (Indrapur, Bulandsahar, U.P.). which was established by the Kṣatriyas—Acalavarman and Bhrukuṇṭhasiṁha-merchants of the town of Indrapur.[12] It is significant to note that Devaviṣṇu, a Brāhmaṇa of orthodox Vedic tradition[13] gave an endowment for the purpose of maintaining a lamp in this Sun-temple. The guild of oilman was expected to give two *palas* of oil for the lamp. This piece of evidence is significant because here the temple-construction and the solar worship by means of a lamp most probably before a solar image is done by the indigenous peoples of India—Kṣatriyas, Brāhmaṇas of orthodox Vedic tradition (not lower Śākaldvīpī Brāhmaṇas) and Vaiśyas. This evidence falsifies the popular[14] myth that Irānian Magas were solely responsible for these two traditions of the Sun-cult in ancient India. Besides Irānian Magas, the Indians of even orthodox tradition were not far behind in following these two practices. The name of the Sun-god for whom the temple was constructed is purely indigenous i.e. Savitri (*Bhagavate Savitre*) and not Irānian Mithra. Thus by the middle of the fifth century A.D. a full-fledged solar sect with all the paraphernalia of a temple, image, priesthood, rites and procedures has come into vogue. Thus the literary evidence of the *Mahābhārata*[15] for the existence of a sect of *Sauras* is corroborated by the epigraphy. This inscription supplies us the earliest positive evidence for the existence of a Sun-temple in Uttar Pradesh by the middle of the fifth century A.D.

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[7] Sircar, D.C., *Select Inscriptions*, p. 186, fn. 5.

[8] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, III, p. 70. This account is based on author's article, The Solar Cult As Revealed by The Gupta and Post-Gupta Inscriptions, *Bhāratīya Vidyā*, vol. XXVII, Nos. 1—4, pp. 41—48.

[9] Cf. *R.V.*, X.37.4; VII.63.1; IV.13.4; *A.V.*, VI.12.1, IX.1.19, XIII.2-4, *K.B.*, XXV.9; *S.B.*, III.3.2.12; XII.9.2.8; In the *Mahābhārata*, Sūrya is known from such epithets as Divākara, Prakāśakarman, Bhāskara and is also described as possessed of radiant rays, Aṁśumat, Arka, Sahasra-kiraṇa, Sahasraraśmi. In the Purāṇas, Bhāskara is one of the twelve common names of the Sun-god. cf. *Sāmba P.*, 9.

[10] *R.V.*, I.50.11,12; X.37.4; *A.V.*, I.22.4; VI.83.1, Karambelkar, *The Atharvaveda and Āyurveda*, pp. 70—73.

[11] *R.V.*, III.62.10; *S.V.*, II.8.12; *Y.V.*, III.35; A.V., XIX.71.1; *B.A.U.*, V.14.1-6; *Manu S.*, II.77-83; *Viṣṇu-Dharmasūtra*, 55.11-17; *Maitrī U.*, VI.7. Gāyatrī hymn is prescribed for control and peace of mind.

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[12] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, vol. III, p. 70—*Indrapur ādhiṣṭhāna-māḍāsyāta-lagnam-eva pratiṣṭhapitaka bhagavate savitre dīp-opayojyam-ātma-yaśobhivriddhaye mūlyaṁ prayacchatiḥ.*

[13] Devaviṣṇu is described as Caturvedin, who recites the hymns of *Agnihotra* sacrifice. The name of the donor—Devaviṣṇu is still indicative of the fact that the Sun under the name of Viṣṇu must have been worshipped in his family, hence this name.

[14] *Bhaviṣya P.*, 139. The legend occurs in the *Varāha, Skanda, Sāmba* Purāṇas cf. Hazra, *Studies* vol. I, pp. 29ff.

The Mandasor stone inscription of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman (437-38 and 473-74 A.D.) has also rightly been taken as an inscription of solar worship[16] as it belongs throughout to solar form of worship. As in the Indor copper plate inscription, here also the Sun-god under the name of Savitri and Bhāskara is invoked as decorated with beams and shining day after day. The Sun-god is invoked here in sectarian fashion. He is worshipped by the hosts of gods, Siddhas, Brāhmaṇas, Gandharvas Kinnaras and Naras. He is worshipped for the sake of existence. He is the cause of destruction and commencement of the universe. He grants desires to those who worship him.[17] Here a few descriptions from the indigenous literature are quoted which contain sectarian form of solar worship. In the *Mahābhārata*[18] it is said that he discovers, sustains and supports the universe. He is adored by the Rsis, Brāhmaṇas, Siddhas, Cāraṇas,

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[15] *M.B.H.* (Cr.), VII.58.15.

[16] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, vol. III, pp. 79—88.

[17] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, vol. III, p. 81—(*Sid*) *dh* (*a*) *m* // *Y* (*o v*) *rit* (*t*) *y-a* (*r*) *ttham upāsyate sura-gaṇais siddhaiś=ca siddhy artthibhir ddhyān aik-āgra parair-vvidheya=viṣayair=mmokṣ—ārtthibhir=yyogibhiḥ bhaktyā tīvra-tapodhanaiś-ca munibhiś śāpa-prasāda-kṣamair hetur-yyo jagataḥ=kṣay-ābhyuda Yayoḥ-pāyāt-sa vo bhāskaraḥ* //
....gandharvv-āmara-siddha-kinnara-narais-saṁstūyate bhyutthito bhaktebhyaś-ca dadāti yo-bhilaṣitaṁ tasmai savitre namaḥ //

[18] *M.B.H.* (Cr.), III.3.29.

Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Guhykas, Marutas, Vidyādharas, Sādhyas, Vasus, Pannagas and Rudras. He who adores Sūrya on the sixth and seventh lunar days with humility and tranquillity of mind obtains the desired thing from him. In the *Sāmba Purāṇa* such sectarian descriptions of Sun-worship are found at more than one occasion. He is attended by the gods, Yakṣas, Gandharvas, Apsarās, by the three Vedas incarnate, by the sages etc.[19] A perusal of these descriptions from literary works and that of the Mandasor inscription will reveal that virtually there is no difference in the ideas of solar sectarianism as preached in these two different sets of evidence. On the other hand they corroborate each other.

Further the testimony of this inscription for Sun-worship is significant as it informs us that a noble and unequalled temple of the bright rayed orb (i.e. Sun) was caused to be built by the silk cloth-weavers, as a guild, with the stores of wealth, acquired by craft, in 437 A.D. This temple had broad and lofty spires and resembled a mountain and was white as the rays of the risen moon. It was repaired in 473-74 A.D. by the guild.[20] This organized group of silk weavers came from Lāṭa (South Gujarat). This region has been famous for Sun-temples throughout ancient period of Indian history.[21] It is just probable that this tradition of Sun-temples may have been introduced and popularised in central India by such groups from western India. Since the indigenous names of Bhāskara and Savitri are used it appears that there has been indigenous tradition of Sun-temples—a fact which has also been brought to light by the Indor copper plate inscription. This evidence gives 437 A.D. as the date for the establishment of a Sun-temple. This visible monument of Sun-cult was a result of the collective effort of the guild—a fact which shows that there had been a group of followers of the Sun-sect and cult as early as the last quarter of fourth century A.D. because silk weavers of Lāṭa who established this temple in 437 A.D. at Mandasor must have been long before Sun-worshippers and familiar with the tradition of Sun-temples and images.

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[19] Cf. Hazra, *Studies*, vol. I

[20] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, vol. III, p. 83, line 19.

[21] Sankalia, *Archaeology of Gujarat and Kathiawar*, pp. 59-60.

The Khoh copper plate inscription[22] of the Mahārāja Śarvanātha (512-13 A.D.) contains references to Sun-worship. The object of it is to record the grant by the Mahārāja Śarvanātha of the village of Āśramaka on the north bank of river Tamasā on the agreement—between him and the grantees, that it was to be applied to, amongst other things, the purposes of a shrine of Viṣṇu and Sun. There is a reference to different articles used in the daily worship such as *bali, carū, sattra,* perfumes, incense, garlands and lamps.[23] It thus shows full-fledged theism of Sun-worshippers. Since Viṣṇu and Āditya are mentioned separately it is clear that both had separate existence and had temples and followers of their own. All these may be taken as demonstrating solar sectarianism, though there is no mention of the exclusive supremacy of the Sun-god. Moreover, the grant by a king for two temples of different gods and its maintenance by public shows the liberal attitude. Khoh has been located in Nagod of central India. Thus Sun-worship was quite popular in central India in the beginning of the 6th century A.D.

The Gwalior stone inscription of Mihirakula[24] may also be regarded as an inscription of solar worship. Here the Sun-god has been invoked in his aspect of day-maker and dispeller of darkness having a wheeled-chariot with horses. He dispells distress also.[25] Such descriptions of the

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[22] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, vol. III, pp. 125—129.

[23] *Pratiṣthāpitaka-bhagavat-pādānāṁ āditisā-bhaṭṭārakapādānāñ =ca khaṅḍaphuṭṭapratisaṁ-skāra-karaṇāya va (ba) li-caru-sattra gandhadhūpa-mālyadīpa-pravarttanāya c= (ā) tisriṣṭaḥ.* Fleet, op. cit., p. 127 f.n. 3 has rightly taken *Āditya* for '*Āditisā*'.

[24] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, vol. III, pp. pp. 161—64.

[25] *(OM) (ja) yati Jalada-vāla-dhvāntam utsārayan=svaiḥ kiraṇa-nivahajālair=Vyoma vidotayadbhiḥ U (daya-gr)*

Sun-god are quite common in the Vedic as well as in the Purāṇic literature.[26] Further this inscription records the building of a stone temple of the Sun under the name of Bhānu by a person named Mātriceṭa on the mountain called Gop,[27] the hill on which Gwalior fortress stands. In the Purāṇic fashion it is said that those who cause to be made an excellent house of the Sun, like in lustre to the rays of the moon, their abode is in heaven.[28] It appears as if the author has a Sun-sect in mind as he refers it as a famous proclamation of true religion (*sad-dharmmakhyāpanaṁ*). Further sectarianism is again hinted at when it is said that this temple of the Sun will endure as long as Śiva and Viṣṇu enjoy glories, thus showing that the Sun-god is not inferior to these sectarian gods. This inscription gives another instance of a Sun-temple of indigenous tradition (as appears from the indigenous name 'Bhānu') in central India in the sixth century A.D.

The Shahpur stone image inscription of Ādityasena[29] (672-73 A.D.) is on 'the pedestal of a standing image of the Sun, represented as a man, 2′—10″ high, holding a waterlily in each hand and with, on each side, a small standing figure, that on the right being armed with a club'. The occasion for the writing of this inscription was the installation of the image by the Balādhikrita Sālpakṣa in the *Agrahāra* of Nālandā (Bihar) when Ādityasena of late Gupta dynasty was ruling. Firstly, the significance of this inscription for Sun-worship lies in the fact that it shows that royal patronage was available to solar cult, as a high government offi-

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r (i) -taṭāgra (ṁ) maṅḍayan yas=tura (ṁ) gaiḥ cakita-gamana-kheda-bhrāṅta-caṁcat-saṭ-āntaiḥ / udayag (i) r (i).

[26] Cf. Macdonell, *V.M.*, p. 30; *R.V.*, I.175.4, IV.30.4, IV.28.2, V.29.10; *Viṣṇu P.*, II.8.

[27] *....Mātricetaḥ parvva.... vastavyaḥ nānā-dhātu-vicitre Gop-ahvayanāmni bhūdhare ramye kāritavān=śailamayaṁ bhānoḥ prāsādavaramukhyaṁ //*

[28] *....pā (?) dena ye Kāryanti bhānoś=Candr-āṁśu-samaprabhaṁ griha-pravaraṁ teṣāṁ vāsaḥ svargge yāvat=Kalpa-Kṣayo bhavati / /*

[29] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, vol. III, pp. 208—210.

cial like Balādhikrita (commander of the troops) Sālapakṣa made the gift. The name of the king Ādityasena may be indicative of his leaning towards solar (Āditya) cult. Further it shows the extension of the popularity of the Sun-cult to Bihar by the beginning of the seventh century A.D. A number of Sūrya images of standing type has been found from all over India.[30]

The Deo-Baranārk inscription of Jīvitagupta II[31] (a later Gupta king of Magadha) gives an interesting aspect of Sun-worship in the sense that here the grant of the village either Vāruṇikā or Kiśorvāṭaka has been recorded for the Sun-god under the title of Varuṇa-Vāsin. This name of the Sun-god is of special importance because it preserves the old Rigvedic tradition which originally regards Varuṇa—the all encompassing Sky as one of the twelve Ādityas.[32] This epigraphic evidence confirms the Rigvedic tradition that originally Varuṇa was connected with the Sun-god. This again shows the popularity of Sun-worship of indigenous type in Bihar. Even two special festivals in honour of the Sun still take place in Deobarṇārk (Shahabad District, Bihar) on the sixth day of the first fortnight of the months—Caitra and Kārttika.[33]

The Nirmand copper plate inscription of Mahāsāmanta and Mahārāja Samudrasena[34] informs us that the personality of Sun-god under the name of Mihira (Mitra) was merged with the lord Śiva and some form of Sun-worship was combined with the Śaiva rites as is evident by the name of Śiva as Mihireśvara in place of Kapāleśvara.[35] Since there is a reference to a temple of Mihireśvara by Mihiralakṣmī and a grant of a village Sūlisagrāma for the purpose of giving *bali, caru, sattra,* garland, incense etc. to god Mihireśvara it appears that the cult of Mithra was mixed up with the cult of Śiva in Punjab because after the advent of the Magas in Punjab,[36] the cult of the Sun-god under the name of Mithra must have gained momentum,[37] and the Śaivas had to compromise with them so that they may not lose ground. Such a spirit of compromise is quite popular in ancient India. The worship of Śiva and Sūrya jointly can be traced in indigenous literature,[38] and in Hinduised Java[39] and Bali such worship was quite popular. It is no surprise if in Punjab which must have been a stronghold of Magian cult of Mithraism[40] the Sun-god under the name of Mihira was taken into the fold of Śaivism. It is significant to point out that the Brāhmaṇas of Atharvavedic traditions[41] (not of the orthodox Vedic tradition have been associated with this cult where Śiva (probably an indigenous non-Āryan)[42] and Mihira (the Sun-god of Magian priests of Irān)[43] have been associated together and a public worship in this aspect is referred to. There are a few names of this family such as Raviṣena, Mihiralakṣmī, Varuṇasena which may be interpreted as referring to the fact that the solar faith was a popular creed in this family.

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[30] For instance, Mathura Museum Fig. No. 595, 1256, 2339 are standing Sūrya images. cf. Agrawala, V.S., *Mathura Museum Catalogue*. The Kumārpur and Niyāmatpur figures are also examples of standing Sūrya images on pedestals. Cf. Saraswati, S.K., *Early Sculpture of Bengal*, p. 12.

[31] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, vol. III, pp. 213—18.

[32] Macdonell, *V.M.;* Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, vol. I, pp. 94—104; Monier Williams, *Indian Wisdom*, pp. 12f and 68. Muir, *O.S.T.*, vol. I, p. 27, note 42. K. C. Chattopadhyaya regards Varuṇa in the *Rigveda* as the nocturnal Sun, cf. Pande, G. C., *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*, p. 268.

[33] *A.S.I.*, vol. XVI, p. 72.

[34] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, vol. III, pp. 288-89.

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[35] ....*Mahārāja—Śrī Samudraseno Jananī Śrī Mihiralakṣmyā dharmm-ārtthaṁ bhagvatas=Tripurāntakasya loka-āloka-karasya-praṇatānukampinas=sarvvaduhkha-kṣaya-karo kapālesvare jananī-pratiṣṭhitasya Śrī Mihireśvarasya Kapāleśvaravva (ba) li-caru-sat (t) ra-sragdhūpa-dīpi (pa) -dānāya satataṁ śīrṇṇa-khaṅḍasphuṭitasādhanāya, ca-Nirmmaṇḍ-āgrāhār-Ātharvvano Vrā (brā) hmana-stomāya Sūlisagrāmanava. Vaidilakarmm-ānta-Vakkhalikakuṭumvi (mbi) nā*...

[36] Hazra, *Studies,* vol. I, pp. 29—33.

[37] Bhandarkar, R.G. *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism* and *Minor Religious Systems,* p. 219, Jairazbhoy—*Foreign Influence in Ancient India,* p. 153, Frank Cumont, *Mysteries of Mithra.*

[38] *Matsya P.,* LV.3.5.; *Saura Purāṇa*-2. The literary tradition finds confirmation in iconography, Banerjea, *D.H.I.,* p. 551.

[39] For instance Sūrya-Sevana is nothing but the worship of Śiva under the name of Sūrya in Java, See D. K. Biswas—Sūrya and Śiva, *I.H.Q.* 1948, p. 142 and R. C. Majumdar. *Suvarṇadvīpa,* pt. II.

[40] Beal, S., *Buddhist Record of the Western World,* vol. II, pp. 274-75. Hiuen-Tsiang informs us that Multan (Punjab) had a Sun-temple where annual Sun-worship was done with great pomp and show.

The epigraphic evidence confirms the view that the royal patronage was available to the cult of the Sun-god. Two inscriptions are to be noted here. The Māliyā copper plate inscription of Mahārāja Dhārāsena II[44] (571-72 A.D.) informs us that Mahārāja Dhārāpaṭṭa of the Maitraka dynasty of Vallabhī was a most devout worshipper of the Sun (*Paramāditya-bhaktaḥ*). The region of Kathiawad where this inscription is found has been famous for Sun-worship.[45] It is interesting to find that the name of the ruling family is Maitrakas—a derivative of Mitra—the Sun-god of Indo-Irānian tradition.[46] This dynasty has been held as identical with the Mihira clan of the Huṇas.[47] Mihirakula was connected with Sun-worship. It appears as if the Mihira clan also derived its name from the god Mihira. It appears that the Maitraka family which may have been the Indianised form of the Mihira clan of the Huṇas was specially devoted to the Sun-god as most of the kings except Dhārāpaṭṭa who has been directly called a Sun-worshipper are regarded as devotee of Viṣṇu who himself was an aspect of the Sun-god originally.[48] The Vardhana dynasty of Thāneśwara also appears to have patronized the solar cult. The Sonepat copper seal inscription[49] of Harṣa-vardhana gives the epithet of *Paramādityabhaktaḥ* to Rājya-vardhana, Ādityavardhana and Prabhākaravardhana.

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[41] Winternitz, *H.I.L.*, p. 129. The *Atharvaveda* was originally not included in the category of a sacred Veda, hence the tradition of three Vedas only. Probably the *Atharvaveda* represented the popular side of religion, Griffith, *A.V.*, (Trans.) Intro., VIII-IX.

[42] Sastri, N.K., *Cul.H.I.*, vol. III.

[43] Moulton, *Early Zorastrianism*, pp. 187—191. *The Treasure of Magi*, p. 9.

[44] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, vol. III, pp. 164—71.

[45] Sankalia, H.D., *Archaeology of Gujrata*, p. 39 ff.

[46] Macdonell, A.A., *Vedic Mythology*, p. 30; Keith, A.B., *The Religion and Philosophy of Veda and Upaniṣad*, vol. I, Hopkins, *Religions of India*, p. 71. Frazer, J.G., *Worship of Nature*, p. 450.

[47] Fleet, J.F., *C.I.I.*, vol. III, Intro, p. 12.

Sun-worship in the Early Mediaeval Inscriptions:

The first point that impresses a student of the early mediaeval inscriptions of northern India from the point of view of the Sun-cult is that the royal patronage was available to this cult on an increased scale in this period. In the Gupta inscriptions the position seems to be different in the sense that there the patrons of the Sun-cult were generally public men—officers, merchants, scholars, fighters, cloth-weavers etc., not kings.[50] But in the early mediaeval inscriptions of northern India royal families are seen patronising the Sun-cult on an unprecedented scale. In many cases it became the family cult of royal dynasties. The early Gurjaras of Gujarat were definitely hereditary Sun-worshippers. The Kairā plates[51] of Dadda II (629 A.D.) refer to the devotion of Dadda I (570—590 A.D.), the grandfather of Dadda II, to the Sun-god from his very birth. The expression 'from his very birth' is significant in the sense that it shows the faith of Dadda I to this cult as an inheritance from his family tradition. However, as the history of early Gurjaras before Dadda I is still in the realm of darkness it is difficult to say as to when and from where the early Gurjaras adopted the Sun-cult as their family-cult. In the same inscription Dadda II[52] is said to be a devotee of the Sun-god. The Kairā plates of Dadda II of 684[53] A.D. repeat the devotion of Dadda I and Dadda II in similar terms as in the previous inscription. The Saṅkeḍhā plate of 641 A.D. repeats the expression hitherto used for Dadda I and Dadda II for another member of the family—Raṇagraha.[54] The Saṅkheḍā plate of 642 A.D. again confirms the patronage of Dadda I to the Sun-cult.[55] The later kings of the early Gurjaras from Dadda III onwards became devotees of Śiva but they continued to be favourable to the Sun-god. The best example of this favouritism to the Sun-cult may be seen in the case of Dadda III who, in spite of his Śaivite leanings, made a grant to the Sun-god on the *Rathasaptamī tithi*.[56] That the Sun-cult was the family-cult of the early Gurjaras is also evidenced by the use of a solar emblem in the upper part of the plates in relief. It is probably an '*agnikuṅḍa*.[57] The old solar emblem of the dynasty was continued by later kings of the family who became 'Śaivas'. It is difficult to comment in our present state of knowledge on the circumstances which forced the early Gurjaras from Dadda III onwards to change their family cult from Sun-worship to Śiva-worship. But the continuance of the Sun-cult side by side the Śiva-cult in the family of the early Gurjaras after Dadda III reminds us the position of the Vardhana dynasty which also continued family cult of the Sun even after the adoption of the Śaivism and Buddhism. Many rulers of other families of Gujarat-Kathiawar region seem to have patronized the Sun-cult. Balavarman and Avantivarman II of the Chālukya dynasty gave gifts to a Sun-temple named Taruṇāditya in 893 and 899 A.D.[58] respectively. The Ganesar inscription[59] of Bhīma II found near Dholka tells us that Vastupāla, the famous Jain minister, had patronized the Sun-cult by installing images of the consorts of Sūrya—Ratnadevī and Rājadevī. The Vanthli inscription of Śāraṅgadeva[60] shows that Sūrya's son—Revanta was also worshipped in some parts of Kathiawar. According to the Kādi grant[61] a '*Mahāmaṅḍaleśvara*' of *Varddhipathak* gave some grant for the maintenance of the temples of Bāla Nārāyaṇa and Rūpa Nārāyaṇa. They seem to refer to some form of Sūrya or composite aspect of Sūrya and Viṣṇu. The Sendrakas of Gujarat also appear to have some family affiliation with the Sun-cult on the basis of the information supplied by the Bagumra plates of Allaśakti of 656 A.D.[62] The Kalachuris of Ratanpur also appear to have patronized the Sun-god as is evident from their inscriptions such as Amodā plates of Prithvīdeva I of 1079 A.D., Sarkho plates of Ratnadeva II of 1128 A.D., the Daikoni plates of Prithvīdeva II of 1138 A.D., the Bilaigarh plates of Prithvīdeva II of 1148 A.D., the Amodā plates (first set) of Prithvīdeva II of 1148 A.D., the Ghoṭiā plates of Prithvīdeva II of 1148 A.D., the Amodā plates (second set) of Prithvīdeva II of

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[48] Hopkins, *J.A.O.S.*, vol. XVI, pp. 275—81. Keith, *R.P.V.U.*, vol. I, p. 109. Gonda, *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism*, p. 26 ff.

[49] Fleet, *C.I.I.*, vol. III, pp. 219—221.

[50] A few Maitraka rulers, a Maukhari king—Sūrya-varman and Vardhana rulers are the only important rulers before the early mediaeval period who may be regarded as the patrons of the Sun-cult. See, Srivastava, V.C., 'The Solar Cult As Revealed By The Gupta and Post-Gupta Inscriptions', *Bhāratīya Vidyā*, vol. XXVII, Nos. 1 to 4, 1967 (1969), pp. 41—48.

[51] Mirashi, V.V., *C.I.I.*, vol. IV, pt. 1, p. 59 ff. *'Nāgakulasantatirutpattita eva dinkara caraṇakamala praṇāmāpanītāśeṣa-duritanivahaḥ Sāmanta Daddaḥ.*

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[52] Mirashi, op. cit., p. 71—'*Dinkara caraṇā-rccanaraatsya śrī-vītarāgasunoḥ* [*svahastoyaṁ*] *praśā* [*nta*] *rāgasy.*'

[53] Ibid., p. 68, L. 4; p. 71 L. 50, 51.

[54] Ibid., pp. 73-74.

[55] Ibid., p. 78.

[56] Ibid., p. CXLIX, pt. II, p. 617.

[57] Ibid., p. CXLIX, p. 57.

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[58] *Historical Inscriptions of Gujarat,* No. 234.

[59] Sankalia, *Archaeology of Gujarat and Kathiawar,* No. 224.

[60] Ibid., No. 245, Luders' List, *E.I.* X, No. 624. The worship of Revanta as an integral part of the Sun-cult is found referred to in the literary works of the period. See, *Bṛhat-saṁhitā,* 57, Verse 56, *Viṣṇudharmottara,* III.70.5, Raghunandana, *Tithitattva,* p. 690 quotes a passage about Revanta worship from *Kalpataru* which took it from the *Brahma P.—Pujyaḥ Sāśvaiśca Revanto Yathāvibhavavistaraiḥ. Kālikā P.,* 85.49; *Mārkaṅḍeya P.,* 109.22-23; Banerjea, *J.I.S.O.A.,* XVI, pp. 91—93.

[61] Sankalia, op. cit., The composite aspect of the Sun-cult is well brought out by literary references and actual images of composite type. See, Banerjea, *J.I.S.O.A.,* XVI, pp. 86-89; *Mārkaṅḍeya P.,* 109.71.

[62] Mirashi, op.cit., p. 119.

1154 A.D.; the Amodā plates of Jājalladeva II of 1167 A.D., the Peṇdrābhandh plates of Pratāpmalla of 1214 A.D., the Bilaigarh plates of Pratāpmalla of 1218 A.D., and the Pāragaon plates of Ratnadeva II of 1134 A.D. and Prithvīdeva II of 1146 A.D.[63] Since the Sun has been praised as the foremost luminary of the sky and the 'Primeval Being' in almost all the grants of the Kalachuris of Ratnpur as mentioned above it is natural to suggest that the Sun-god may have been the family deity of the Kalachuris of Ratanpur.

Many Chauhan rulers also patronized the Sun-cult in Rajasthan. According to the inscription of Caṅḍamahāsena of Dholpur Caṅḍamahāsena was a patron of the Sun-cult.[64] The Pratāpgarh inscription of Mahendrapāla II (946 A.D.) shows Indrarāja Chāhamāna, a feudatory of Mahendrapāla II as a patron of the Sun-cult.[65] He is said to have built a Sun-temple named after himself as Indrādityadeva. Alhana and Kīrtipāla of Nādol and Jālor respectively also showed their leanings to the Sun-cult in spite of the[66] fact that they were great Śaivas. The Sanigara Chauhans of Jālor made many benefactions to the Sun-temple named Jagatsvāmin at Bhīnmāl.[67] Siṁharāja of Jaṅgaladeśa—a branch of the Chauhan dynasty was also, according to the Thamvala inscription of Siṁharāja, a patron of the Sun-god as he gave some benefactions to the Sun-temple named Raṇṇāditya.[68] Sāmantasiṁha of Mewar also appears to have sympathised, if not patronized, the cause of Sun-worship as a Sun-temple from Bamnera may be assigned to his reign period on an epigraphic evidence.[69] Vikramasiṁha—a Parmāra ruler, renovated a Sun-temple at Varman in 1299 A.D., according to an inscriptional testimony.[70] From inscriptions[71] it is clear that the Gahāḍavāla rulers were quite sympathetic to the cause of solar cult. The king Jayachanda gifted many villages to the Sun-god under the name Lollārka.[72] The Pratihāra kings—Rāmabhadra and Vināyakapāla appear to have been Sun-worshippers as their tutelary diety was Āditya and they bore the title *'Paramāditya-bhaktaḥ'*.[73] In eastern India royal patronage was not so much available as it was in western India. The Pālas were ardent Budhists. However, there is one significant reference in the copper plates of Viśvarūpasena and Keśavasena of the Sena dynasty (12th cent. A.D.) to the leaning of these kings to the Sun-cult. They call themselves as *'Paramasaura'*.[74] It indicates that they were followers of a Sun-sect. Yakṣapāla, a local king of Gayā, appears to have patronized the Sun-cult because his inscription begins with an invocation to the Sun-god.[75] Thus the inscriptions of early mediaeval period of northern India testify to the fact that the patrons of the Sun-cult were generally kings and other members of the royal family. This tendency is not visible in the inscriptions of the Gupta period.[76] It appears for the first time in the post-Gupta period. This tendency of royal patronage to the Sun-cult goes on increasing in the north, north-western and western India in the early mediaeval period. Most of the Rājpūt families of India had a special affiliation to the Sun-cult though they adopted other cults also. The question of factors for the increased royal patronage to the Sun-cult by the Rājpūts in this age poses a perplexing problem. Is there anything political or racial behind it? In our present state of knowledge it is difficult to answer these questions satisfactorily. Probably, the solar origin[77] of many Rājpūt families may have something to do with this predilection of the Rājpūt families to the Sun-cult. Moreover, the kingly role of the Sun in heaven[78] has been recognized from very early times. The royal families were inclined to patronise the Sun-cult probably because of Sun's connection with kingship. Many feudatories of the imperial Guptas are shown in the inscriptions[79] to have patronised the Sun-cult. After the disappearance of political unity in the post-Gupta period feudatories became independent and it was they who formed the nucleus of the Rājpūts. The increased affiliation of the Rājpūts to the Sun-cult may be due to these factors. If the foreign origin of the Rājpūts is to be believed, the increased emphasis to the Sun-cult by the Rājpūts may be due to their foreign origin as

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[63] Mirashi, op. cit., pt. II, pp. 404, 428, 444, 460, 476, 480, 492, 530, 545, 551, 624, 628.

[64] Hultzsch, (ed.), *Z.D.M.G.*, XL. p. 38.

[65] Ojha, G.H. (Ed.), *E.I.*, vol. XIV, pp. 176—188. The region of Kanauj where this Sun-temple is referred to have been built was famous for Sun-worship from very early days. During the early mediaeval period it became a great centre of the Sun-cult. cf. *Skanda Purāṇa*, (*Brahma Khaṅḍa*) Chs. 31—38.

[66] *E.I.*, vol. IX, pp. 65, 69.

[67] Sharma, D., *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 235.

[68] Sharma, D. (ed), *Rajasthan Through The Ages*, p. 383.

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[69] Ray, H.C., *Dynastic History Of Northern India,* II, p. 1181.

[70] Sharma, D., *Rajasthan Through The Ages,* p. 721

[71] *E.I.,* vol. I, p. 186, *I.A.,* vol. XV, p. 9.

[72] *E.I.,* vol. IV, p. 129.

[73] *E.I.,* vol. XIV, p. 176. Daulatpur plate of Bhojedeva I of Mahodaya also shows Rāmabhadradeva as a *"Paramāditya-bhaktaḥ," E.I.,* vol. V, p. 212.

[74] Majumdar, N.G., *Inscriptions Of Bengal,* vol. III, pp. 140—48, 177—80; S. K. Maity and R. R. Mukherjee, *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions,* p. 325—*"Paramabhaṭṭāraka Paramasaura—Mahārājādhirājārirāj-Vriṣabhaṅkasaṁkara Gauḍeśvara Śrī Viśvarūpasenadevapādā Vijayinaḥ."* No doubt, there are rare references to the royal patronage to the Sun-cult in eastern India, yet eastern India emerged as a great centre of the Sun-cult in this period and was not less important than western India as is attested by iconography and references in the Purāṇas and the digest literature. See, Hazra, *Studies,* vol. I, p. 106. Narasiṁha I of the Eastern Gaṅga dynasty of Orissa patronised the Sun-cult as he built the famous Koṇārk temple of Orissa. The reason for the popularity of the Sun-cult in eastern India lies not in royal patronage but in the efforts of the Sun-priests known as the Ācāryas.

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75. Diwakar, R.R., *Bihar Through The Ages*, p. 325.

76. Srivastava, V.C., The Solar-cult As Revealed By The Gupta and Post-Gupta Inscriptions,*Bhāratīya Vidyā*, vol. XXVII, No. 1 to 4, pp. 41–48.

77. Banerjee, A.C., *Lectures on Rajput History*, pp. 1–29.

78. Ragozin, *Vedic India*, p. 216.

79. *Bhāratīya Vidyā*, vol. XXVII, Nos. 1–4, pp. 41–48.

many foreigners like the Śakas and Kuṣāṇas were followers of the Sun-cult.[80]

The inscriptions of the early mediaeval period of northern India throw interesting light upon the sociological complex of the Sun-cult. Besides the royalty, other classes were also followers of the Sun-cult. The Kairā plate of Dadda II of 684 A.D. informs us that one of the donee was a Brāhmaṇa, Ādityaravi of the Bhāradvāja *gotra*.[81] His name 'Ādityaravi' itself is indicative of his faith in the Sun-worship. Moreover his Bhāradvāja *gotra* also indirectly hints at his solar faith because the connection of the Bhāradvāja *gotra* with Sun-worship is quite ancient.[82] Similarly ın the Saṅkhedā plate of Raṇagraha (641 A.D.), it is mentioned that Raṇagraha who was devoted to Sun-worship gave gifts to a Brāhmaṇa named Āditya-śarman.[83] Here again the name Ādityaśarman is indicative of the faith of this Brāhmaṇa in the Sun-god. The Saṅkhedā plates of Dadda II of 642 A.D. also state that a gift was given to a Brāhmaṇa-Sūrya of the Bhāradvāja *gotra* and of the *Vājasaneyi Madhyandina Śākhā* who had previously migrated from Daśapur.[84] Thus it is clear that besides royalty Brāhmaṇas of orthodox Vedic tradition were also followers of the Sun-cult. There are direct references to the Maga

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[80] One example in this respect is interesting. The Shāhīs of Kabul who are descendants of the Kuṣāṇas seem to have continued their traditional affiliation to the Sun-cult. Udabhāṇḍapur—the capital of Shāhīs had a Sun-temple of Magian tradition. *E.I.*, vol. XXII, p. 97.

[81] Mirashi, op. cit., p. 70.

[82] Srivastava, V.C., 'Some Sun-worshipping Saints Of The Upaniṣads,' *Indian History Congress, Summary of Papers*, Mysore, 1967.

[83] Mirashi, op. cit., pp. 73-74.

[84] Ibid., p. 74. The connection of Daśapur with Sun-worship is much earlier as it appears from Mandasor inscription of Kumāragupta. Cf. Fleet, *C.I.I.*, vol. III, p. 83. It appears that this Brāhmaṇa had some connection with the Maga Brāhmaṇas because western region had been famous for Sun-worshipping Maga Brāhmaṇas. The migration of this Brāhmaṇa from Daśapur indicates in this direction.

Brāhmaṇas-the special Fire-Sun worshipping priests of Irān in the inscriptions. The Huṅḍa inscription (774 A.D.) refers to *'Sūryadvija'*.[85] In this inscription the architect of the Sun-temple—Jayantarāja as well as the Kāyastha who composed the inscription, Śrī Bhogika are referred to as *'Sūryadvijaḥ'*.[86] There are literary references to the fact that the construction of a Sun-temple is essentially to be done by a Maga priest.[87] The provenance of the inscription is also relevant in this context. Huṅḍa where this inscription has been found has been identified with Udabhāṇḍa, the ancient capital of the Shāhī kings of Kabul.[88] As Shāhī dynasty is taken to be the descendant of the Kuṣāṇas it is not surprising that a temple of the Sun-god was constructed there by a Magian priest. The geographical proximity of the place with Irān makes it quite probable that there may have been a vigorous tradition of Magianised Sun-cult in this region and a community of Magian priests has been existing at this place. It is also significant to note that the architect—Jayantarāja of the inscription was a son of a resident of Avanti. It is well known that Avanti had been a famous centre of Sun-worship particularly of Irānian tradition. Varāhamihira, the Magian Sun-worshipper, is referred to as a son of Ādityadāsa-a resident of Avanti in the 6th cent. A.D.[89] From these evidences it may be safely suggested that the *Sūryadvijas* of the inscription were no other than the Magas. They cannot be indigenous Sun-worshipping priests. The Ghaṭiyāl inscription of Kakkarka[90] (861 A.D.) informs us that it was composed by Mātriravi-a Maga Brāhmaṇa. The inscription at Govindapur[91] (Gayā district) dated 1137-38 A.D. refers to the Magas. The inscription of the Maga poet-Gaṅgādhara of the Bhāradvāja clan says that the Aṅgiras Bhāradvājas were held in great respect in Magadha in the 12th century.[92] The Aṅgiras Brāhmaṇas resembled the Magas in their manners. The priests of the famous Koṇārk Sun-temple appear to have been Aṅgirasa Brāhmaṇas. The Purāṇic literature also associates the Aṅgirasas and the Ātharvans with the Sun-cult in the period.[93] Thus there had been a special priesthood of the Sun-cult in eastern India in the period under review which may have been related to the Magian priests, though their indigenous origin cannot be ruled out particularly in view of such facts as special connection of the Bhāradvājas with Sun-worship in the Vedic literature and existence of many Sun-worshipping saints of Atharva-Aṅgiras origin in the Upaniṣads.[94] Thus the inscriptions of the early

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[85] Sahani, D.R. (ed.), *E.I.*, vol. XXII, p. 98.

[86] Ibid., *Upendraputra Jayantrāja Āvantiko Sūryadvijah Kāyastha Śrī Virendraputra Śrī Bhogika Sūryadvijaḥ*. See, Upadhyaya, B., *The Socio-Religious Condition of North India;* E.I., vol. II, p. 333, also refers to the immigration of Maga Brāhmaṇas from Scythia to India. This point may be relevant for the theory of Kāyastha as being derived from old Persian Khshāyathiya found in the Achaemenid inscriptions. See, Sircar, D.C., *Studies in the Society and Administration of Ancient and Mediaeval India*, vol. I, p. 162, f.n. 1.

[87] *Brihat Saṁhitā*, 60.19.

[88] Sahani, D.R., *E.I.*, XXII, p. 97.

[89] *Brihatjātaka* (Tr. B. Suryanarayana Rao), ch. XXVIII Stanza IX—*Ādityadāsa—Tanyas tad avāpta bodhaḥ kapitthake savitrālabdha-vara-prasādaḥ Āvantiko muny-matany=avolokya saṁyag=ghoraṁ Varāhamihiro ruciraṁ cakāra.*

See, Ajay Mitra Sastri, Fresh light on the life of Varāhamihira, *Journal of the Oriental Research*, Baroda, vol. XV (1966) Nos. 3-4, pp. 374—77.

[90] *E.I.*, vol. IX, p. 279.

[91] *V.S.M.R.S.*, p. 153.

[92] Dave, J.H., *Immortal India*, vol. II, p. 113.

[93] *Brahma P.*, 106.10–*Atharvātharvaṅgiraso nikhilaṁ yacchate raviḥ.*

[94] *C.U.*, III.17, *Ārṣeya Upaniṣad*, quoted by R. D. Ranade and S. K. Belvalkar, *History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. II, p. 298. See, V. C. Srivastava, Some Sun-worshipping Saints of the Upaniṣads, *Indian History Congress, Mysore*, 1967. There is a story in the *Brahma Khaṅḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa* (Chs. 31—38) whose aim was to belittle the social position of the Caturvedins by the Trivedins. It is also known that the Caturvedins were Sun-worshippers and connected with the Sun-temple according to the Indor copper plate inscription cf. Fleet, *C.I.I.*, vol. III, p. 70. They were called Caturvedins because they recognized four Vedas including the

mediaeval period are familiar with the Maga-Brāhmaṇas. According to the Sunḍha inscription[95] two brothers belonging to the Mathura Kāyastha community made donations for the maintenance of the employees of the Sun-temple at Bhinmāl in the thirteenth century A.D. Sun-worship was patronised by non-Hindus also. The Ganesar inscription[96] shows the leaning of Vastupāla-a Jain minister to the Sun-cult. Vikala-a Jain in the reign of Rāmadeva added a *maṅḍapa* to the Sun-temple at Cambay according to the Cambay stone inscription.[97]

There are many names in the inscriptions of the period which show the sociological complex of the Sun-cult as well as its sectarian character. Such names are Sūryadevabhaṭṭa,[98] Sūryadevasahasra,[99] Sūrya,[100] Sūryadāsa,[101] Ādityarāma,[102] Sūryaravi,[103] Ādityaśarman,[104] Ādityabhaṭṭa,[105] Ādityadeva,[106] Mātriravi,[107] Ādityaravi,[108] etc. The connection of the Vaiśyas with the Sun-cult is continued in this age. According to a stone inscription from Mahalghāt

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Atharvaveda. Was not this attempt due to their connection with the foreign priesthood?

[95] Sharma, D., *Rajasthan Through the Ages,* p. 721.

[96] Sankalia, op. cit., no. 224.

[97] Sankalia, H.D., op. cit., no. 247. It is interesting to note that Akbar was taught Sun-worship by the Jains. See *Prabhandha Cintāmaṇi,* p. 82.

[98] *E.I.,* vol. V., p. 99.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid., XXII, 216 n; XVI, p. 76; Mirashi, op. cit., p. 78.

[101] *E.I.,* vol. V, *Appendix,* Keilhorn, *Inscriptions Of Northern India From About* 400 *A.D.,* no. 296.

[102] *E.I.,* vol. IV, p. 202.

[103] Ibid., vol. XXII, pp. 196, 198.

[104] Ibid., pp. 94, 95, 96; Mirashi, op. cit., pp. 73-74.

[105] Ibid., vol. XVI, pp. 45, 47, 50.

[106] Ibid., vol. XX, pp. 67–69.

[107] Ibid., vol. IX, p. 279.

[108] Mirashi, op. cit., p. 70.

at Bhilsa, a merchant of the Parvāda community was the donor of a permanent endowment in favour of the temple of the Sun-god known as Bhaillasvāmī at Bhilsa.[109] The Sonepur (Orissa) plates of Mahā Bhavagupta II[110] refers to a '*Kamalavana-Vaṇiksthāna*'-a merchant's association which transferred some donations to Śrī Keśavabhaṭṭārarka devakula and Śrī Ādityabhaṭṭarakadevakula.

Sun-worship referred to in the early mediaeval inscriptions of northern India is mostly sectarian. A few names and titles employed in these inscriptions in connection with Sun-worship mentioned above are valuable guides. The term '*Paramasaura*' used for Keśavasena and Viśvarūpasena is indicative of the existence of a Sun-sect. There is a reference to a Brāhmaṇa-Sūrya-a donee of a gift given in connection with Sun-worship. This name is significant in the sense that it may have been adopted out of extreme devotion of the person to the Sun-sect. Similarly such names as Ādityaravi and Ādityaśarman found in inscriptions in connection with Sun-worship may also show sectarian leanings of these persons to the Sun-god. All the elements of a sect such as supremacy, exclusiveness and fixed procedure may be traced in Sun-worship as is revealed by the early mediaeval inscriptions of northern India. At one place the Sun has been referred to as the 'Primeval Being'.[111] Indirect hints to a class of exclusive Sun-worshippers may be taken from such terms as *Parama-Saura*, and persons like a Brāhmaṇa Sūrya, Āditya Śarman and Sūryadāsa. It appears that the Brāhmaṇas of the *Vājasneyi Madhyandina Śākhā* had special affiliation to Sun-worship. Daśapur had a long tradition of the Sun-cult and there had been a class of Sun-worshippers in the region.[112] There are references to the images and temples of the Sun-god also. The Cambay stone inscription[113] is familiar with a Sun temple. There in another reference to a Sun-temple known as Jayāditya at Kāvi.[114] The Dabhoi stone inscription of Vīsaldeva[115] (1265 A.D.) refers to the restoration of a Sun-temple named Mūlasthāna probably near at Dabhoi. One inscription of Śīlāditya[116] (606-612 A.D.) refers to a Sun-temple. There was a Sun-temple named Taruṇāditya according to the plates of Balavarman and Avantivarman.[117] There is a reference to the temple of Bāla Nārāyaṇa and Rūpa Nārāyaṇa.[118] Actual Sun-images have been found with inscription.[119] Magas-the special priests of the Sun-cult are also mentioned in the early mediaeval inscriptions of northern India as discussed above.

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[109] Quoted by D. C. Sircar, *E.I.*, vol. XXX, p. 211. Indor copper plate inscription of the Gupta period connects the Vaiśyas with Sun-worship as is evident from the term 'guild of oilmen'. Mandasor inscription too connects Vaiśyas with it as is clear from the term 'guild of silk-cloth weavers'; Srivastava, V.C., *Bhāratīya Vidyā*, XXVII, pp. 41—43.

[110] Chhabra, B.C., (ed.), *E.I.*, vol. XXIII, pp. 248—55.

[111] Mirashi, op. cit., pt. II, p. 404.

Local forms of the Sun-god are found referred to in the inscriptions. Bhaillasvāmī was a local form of the Sun-god at Bhilsā as is known from several inscriptions.[120] This form appears to have been known in Gujarat also as Mahārāja Siddharāja of the Chālukyas of Gujarat is said to have erected a Sun-temple called Bhayalasvāmī according to the *Saraswatī Purāṇa.*[121] Nimbāditya also appears to be a local name of the Sun-god in some regions of Malwa as Jainad stone inscription[122] of the Parmāra king Jagaddeva (11th cent. A.D.) informs us. The inscription begins with '*Om namaḥ Sūryāya*'. Nimbāditya temple referred to in the inscription was undoubtedly a Sun-temple. Bālanārāyaṇa and Rūpanārāyaṇa referred to in the Kādi grant[123] are also local variations of the Sun-god. Lollārka to whom Jayachanda gifted many villages was a local form of the Sun-god.[124] The Purāṇas[125] give an account of this form of Sun-worship.

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[112] Mirashi, op. cit., pt. II, p. 78.

[113] Sankalia, op. cit., No. 247.

[114] *I.A.*, vol. V., p. 144 ff.

[115] Sankalia, op. cit., no. 233. The inscription refers to the restoration of a temple of the Sun-god known as Mūlasthāna. It is quite probable that the reference may be to the ancient Sun-temple of Multan. With the advent of Muslims in the region it appears Multan Sun-temple was neglected and a Hindu *Rājā* Vīsaladeva tried to restore it in the 13th century A.D.

[116] Majumdar, R.C. (ed.) *The Classical Age,* p. 625.

[117] *Historical Inscriptions of Gujarat,* No. 234.

[118] Sankalia, op. cit., no. 245.

[119] For example Bairhaṭṭā Sun-temple has the inscription on it. *Samastarogāṇāṁhartā,* cf. R. C. Majumdar (ed.), *History of Bengal,* p. 456.

[120] Sircar, D,C., *E.I.*, vol. XXX, p. 210 ff. Hall, F.E., *J.A.S.B.*, vol. XXXI, p. 111. An inscription found at Bhilsā has the passage *"Bhaillasvāmīnāma ravir—avatu bhuvaḥ svāmināma kriṣna rājaṁ."* Another inscription from this place of 10th cent. A.D. contains an eulogy of the Sun-

The method of Sun-worship can also be gleaned from inscriptions of the period. The Sun-god has long passed the stage of a natural luminary and acquired a fully developed anthropomorphic personality. A few members of the family of Sūrya are found mentioned in the early mediaeval inscriptions. The Vanthli inscription of Sāraṅgadeva[126] informs us that Revanta, son of Sūrya was worshipped in some parts of Kathiawar. There is a reference to the installation of the images of the consorts of Sūrya-Ratnadevī and Rājadevī.[127] The epigraphic testimony of the period

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god. (*Annual Report of the Archaeological Deptt., Gwalior State*, Samvat 1979, no. 25). Alberuni (Sachau's Trans.) pt. I, p. 202 also refers to this god. This god is mentioned in a few Chandela record as well as in an inscription of the Parmāra dynasty.

[121] Majumdar, A.K., *Chālukyas of Gujarat,* p. 299.

[122] *E.I.,* XXII, p. 54.

[123] Sankalia, op. cit.

[124] *E.I.,* vol. IV, p. 125.

[125] See, B. Upadhyaya, op. cit., p. 261. See, Agrawala, V.S., *Vāmana Purāṇa, A Study.*

[126] Sankalia, op. cit., No. 245, *E.I.,* vol. V, p. 236. *Mārkaṇḍeya P.,* LXXVIII.24 explains the name of Revanta.

[127] Sankalia, op. cit., no. 224.

appears to be familiar with the Vedic as well as the Magian traditions of Sun-worship. There is a reference[128] to the worship of the Sun's orb which was a Vedic tradition.[129] He has also been prayed as the foremost luminary of the sky[130] which is again a Vedic survival in the period under review.[131] The Sun has been directly said to be the wonderful bird of the tree of the Vedas.[132] The worship of the Sun as a lotus is an off repeated theme of many inscriptions[133] of the period. The Purāṇic tradition[134] of worshipping the Sun by means of lotus seems to be referred to. These inscriptions also show the sacredness of a few *tithis* for Sun-worship. There is a reference to a gift in connection with Sun-worship on the occasion of *Saṅkrānti.*[135] *Rathasaptamī* was also sacred to the Sun-god.[136] This tradition is essentially Purāṇic.[137]

The upper part of the plates of Gurjaras contains in relief some symbol of Sun-worship-probably an *'agnikuṅḍa'* on their seals. If the solar emblem is taken as the *agnikuṅḍa* of which there is no direct reference in the inscriptions but of which there is a strong tradition in the same region[138] and in the same period, it may be of vital importance for the nature of the Sun-cult as practised by the early Gurjaras. They indicate the Magian tradition of worshipping the Fire and the Sun together. Since in the very inscription the donees are Brāhmaṇas of Vedic tradition it may be presumed that the Magian tradition of the Sun-cult was accepted by the orthodox tradition.

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[128] Mirashi, V. V., op. cit., p. 119—*Prathamdiksarsiprithupa aṅkajagaganavaridhi vidrupallavam* (..) *Tridas* (*rakta*) *Japakusumam navam disatu vo vijayam Ravìmaṅḍalam.*

[129] *R.V.*, VII.66.15; *S.B.*, VII.4.1.10.

[130] Mirashi, op cit., pt. II, p. 404 L-2.

[131] Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 30.

[132] Majumdar, N.G., *Inscriptions of Bengal,* vol. III, p. 126.

[133] Ibid., Mirashi, op. cit., p. 119, p. 60—*'Dìnkara Caraṇakamala prānāma'*.

[134] *Matsya Purāṇa,* ch. 97, Agrawala, V.S., *Matsya Purāṇa—A Study;* Srivastava, V.C., The Purāṇic Records On The Sun-Worship, *Purāṇa,* vol. XI, no. 2, p. 240 ff.

[135] Mirashi, op. cit., p. CXLIX.

[136] Ibid., pt. II, p. 617.

[137] *Matsya Purāṇa,* chs. 76, 77, 78, 85 to 89, 97 etc. deal with the sacredness of these *tithìs.* The digest literature is full of references to these *tithis.* Hazra, R.C., *Studies in the Upa Purāṇas,* vol. I. For example *Caturavarga Cintāmaṇi* III.II, p. 865 associates *saptamī* with the Sun-god while *aṣṭamī* is associated with Śiva.

[138] Sankalia, op. cit., pp. 212–14.

Sun-worship was particularly popular for removal of calamities.[139] The Bhadreniyaka grant of Śīlāditya-I[140] (610-611 A.D.) supplies us information regarding the constituent elements of '*Sūryapūjā*' in this age. The accessories of the '*pūjā*' mentioned in the record are bath (*snāpaṁ*), sandal (*gandha*), flower (*puṣpya-mālya*), lamp oil (*dīpataílla*), vocal and instrumental music (*vādya gīta*) and dances (*nritya*). The sacrifice and offerings (*Bali-caru-sattra*) were also made. A class of the servants of the god (*Pādamūla*) has also been mentioned.

Religious syncretism had been a special characteristic of ancient India. The culmination of this tendency may be seen in the evolution of the *Pañcopāsanā* which gained momentum during the period under review. The Koni inscription of Kalachuri[141]-Prithvīdeva-II records the gift to a five shrined temple of Śiva where the Sun-god must have found a place as one Sun-image has been found from the temple-ruins.

The inscriptions discussed above throw interesting light on the geographical extension of the Sun-cult in this period. The whole of northern India right from Kabul to Bengal-Assam and Kashmir to Gujarat-Kathiawar region had been under the sway of this cult. Particularly there had been a vigorous tradition of Sun-worship in the north-west and western India, though there had been centres of Sun-worship in the eastern India also such as at Koṇārk.

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[139] Majumdar, R.C. (ed.) *History of Bengal*, p. 456.

[140] *E.I.*, vol. XXI, pp. 116–19.

[141] Ibid., vol. XXVII, pp. 276–287.

The Koṇārk temple of the Sun was built during this period. It was a famous seat of the Sun-cult of Irānian tradition in the 13th century A.D.[142] Modhera was another important place of Sun-worship. An inscription[143] on a stone dated 1026 A.D. shows that the Sun-temple at Modhera belonged to the early 11th century A.D. In central India Bhilsa replaced Vidiśā as the chief city in this period. Two inscriptions[144] have been found from this place which show that it had a famous Sun-temple under a name Bhaillasvāmī built in the 9th cent. A.D. There are literary references to the temple till the 13th century A.D. The inscription from Bhilsa alludes to the legend of sage-Āgastya so famous in the solar mythology as depicted in the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇās.[145] The Mārtaṅḍa temple of Lalitāditya of Kashmir was also built during this age. The inscriptions do not tell us about the fate of the Sun-temple at Multān in this period.

The primacy of the Sun-cult[146] in some social units is also referred to in a few inscriptions. The Mahobā plates of Parmāradideva (1173 A.D.) of Chandela dynasty shows that '*Sūrya-pūjā*' was performed first of all and then other gods were worshipped in some sections.[147] In Pratābgarh inscription[148] of the time of Mahendrapāla the first grant begins with two benedectory verses of the Sun-god which are followed by those of Durgā. Thus the epigraphic sources confirm and corroborate the data on Sun-worship extracted from the literary sources.

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[142] Hazra, *Studies,* vol. I, p. 106. cf. *Sāmba P.,* 42.2, *Brahma P.,* 28.32.

[143] Quoted by Dave, J.H., *Immortal India,* vol. III, p. 196.

[144] Sircar, D.C., *E.I.,* vol. XXX, p. 210. A figure of the Sun-god driven by seven horses has been found from Vajramaṭha near Vidiśā. See, *P.R.A.S.,* 1913-14, p. 61.

[145] *M.B.H.,* I.123, 66-67, XIII 150.14-15. *Bhāgavat P.,* VI.6.39.

[146] Upadhyaya, B., op. cit.

[147] *E.I.,* vol. XVI, p. 13, 1.17-18—"*Bhāskarapūjā purahsara*".

[148] Ibid., vol. XIV, pp. 176—188—"*Bhavatu bhavuta Bhānor bhūtāya*".

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9	10		Coomarswamy	Coomaraswamy
9	28		*Śārdātilaka*	*Śāradātilaka*
9		20	Decca	Dacca
11	20		*Bhārtiya Vidyā*	*Bhāratīya Vidyā*
13	35		Bhārtīya	Bhāratīya
14	15		Coomarswamy	Coomaraswamy
15	26		S. N. Rai	S. N. Roy
17	25		basis	basic
22		16	Pl. I. fig. 2	—— (delete)
22		17	Pl. I fig. 3	—— (delete)
23		23	ibid	Gupta, J., op.cit.
28	16		*Dharmaśūtra*	*Dharmasūtra*
29	5		writtings	writings
35	19		wither	whither
50	11		develop	development
51	1		messanger[82]	messenger[82]
51	7		preist	priest
51	18		cept	concept
51	24		there	their
53		112	C.U. c. vg. g.	C.U., III. 17. 7
58	13		*'atmā*	*ātmā*
58	13		verse	verses
61		201	*ātfā*	*ātmā*
63	10		ocuring	occurring
67	11		hare[245]	haired[245]
67	12		an	and
68	8		prominance	prominence
68	15		occurrance	occurrence
85	27		appear	appears
88		429	Coomarswamy	Coomaraswamy

Page	Line	Fn.	For	Read
90	23		*Three step*	*Three steps*
94	21		fool	food
95	26		though	through
104	15		massenger	messenger
107	10		also	all
107		582	Coomarswamy	Coomaraswamy
107		584	*Rigvedic Repetitions*	*Rigveda Repetitions*
115		637	Rai, S. N.,	Roy, S.N.,
118		661	Rai, S.N.	Roy, S.N.,
121	17		occuring	occurring
128	13		wihle	while
131	20		briliancy	brilliancy
137		837	Coomarswamy	Coomaraswamy
155		1003	Coomarswamy	Coomaraswamy
172	2		*Sauyaḥ*[1163]	*Sauryaḥ*[1163]
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178		10	Veeda	Veda
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186		56	Coomarswamy	Coomaraswamy
189	7, 8, 11	104	*Harivaṁsa*	*Harivaṁśa*
212	16		indentified	identified
228	9		light pettaled	eight pettaled
			under light	under eight
244	27		Madea	Medea
258	1		refered	referred
293		132	Terracotas	Terracottas
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300		171	pp. 168–70	pp. 68–70
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303		176	p. 169ff	p. 69 ff.
308		214	*Iconograph*	*Iconography*
310		226	pp. 171–73	pp. 71–73
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339	6-7		extrior	exterior

Page	Line	Fn.	For	Read
xv	29,30		a much come in the 7th cent. A.D. in the wake of Parsee influx in	a much more powerful wave than the first one may have entered in
xxxi	12		Viserga	Visarga
xxxv	20		But	Bust
xxxvi	20		*Saṁbhasga*	*Saṁbhaṅga*

Note—Due to unavoidable reasons Sūrya images from Kumārpur and Niyāmatpur (both in Bangladesh) which were numbered as plates 17a & 17b (p. 302) respectively could not be displayed here. In their places Sūrya images from Bihar and Koṇārk (p. 312) have been displayed as plates Nos. 17a & 17b.

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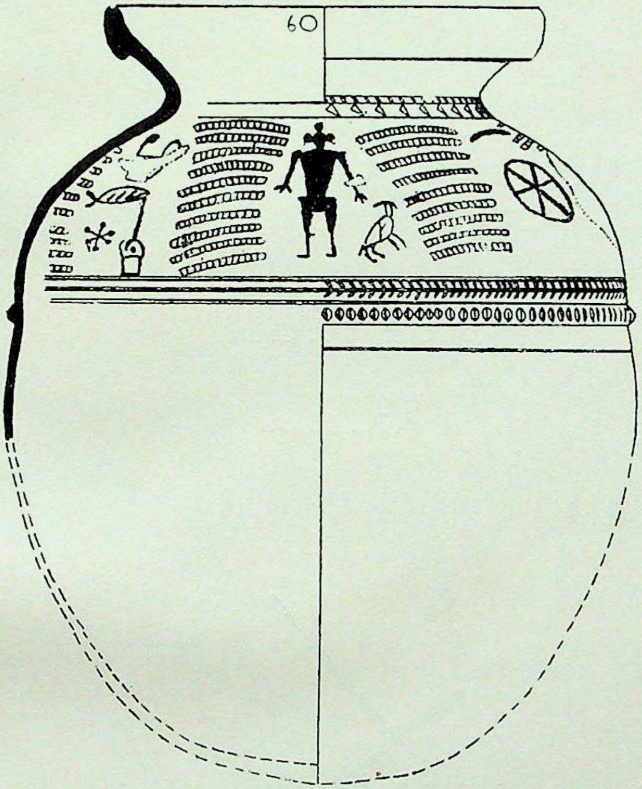

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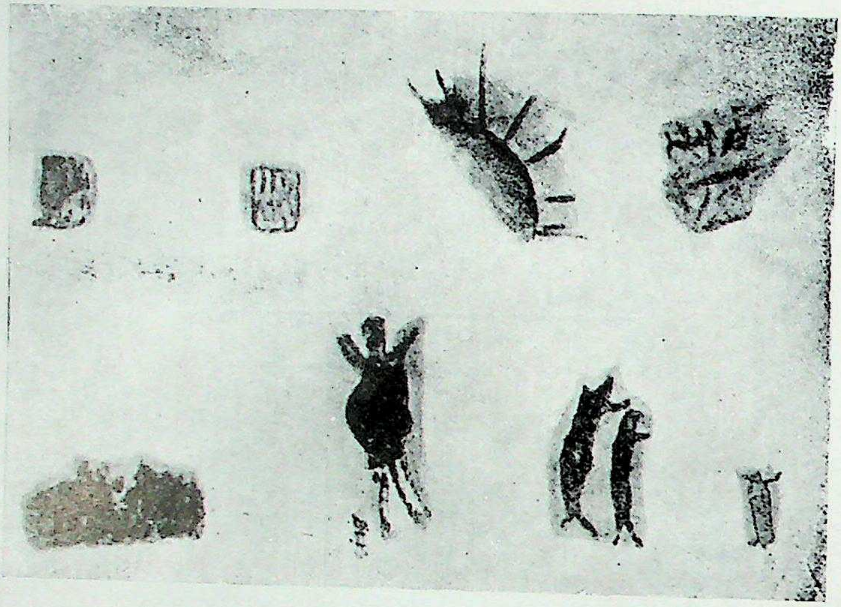

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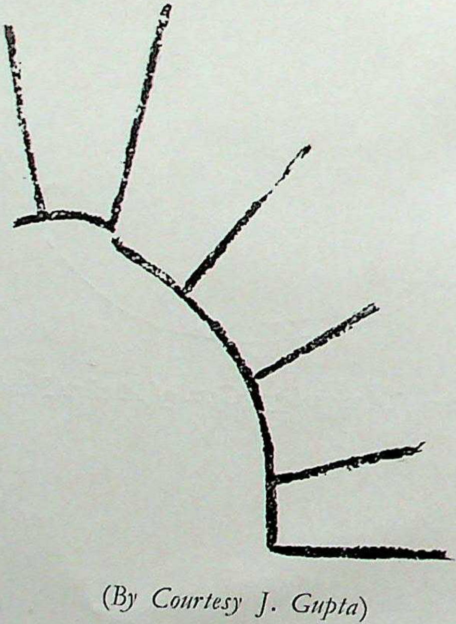

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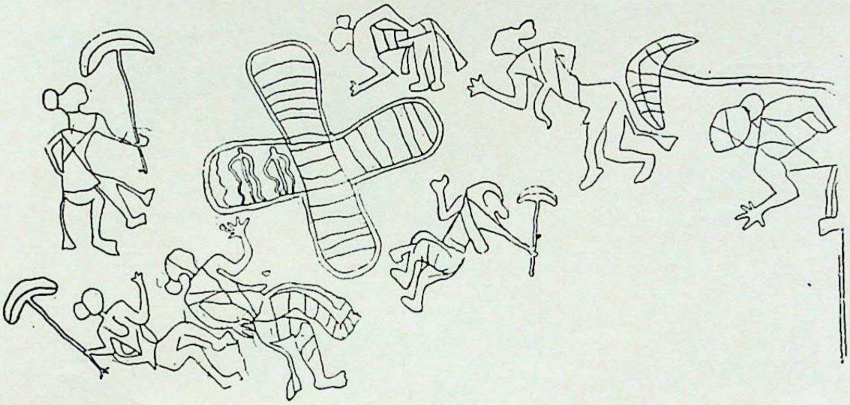

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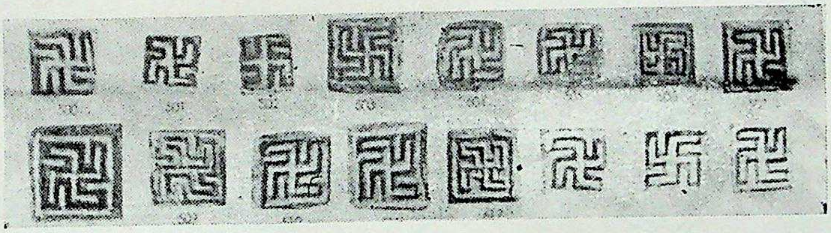
Svastika on Indus Seals



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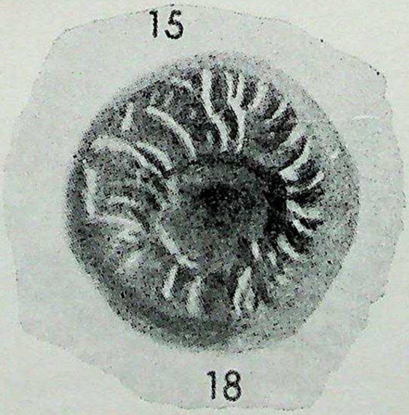

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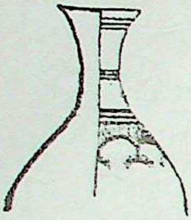

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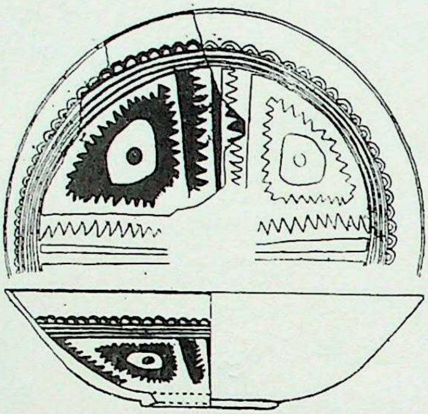
FIG. 1e



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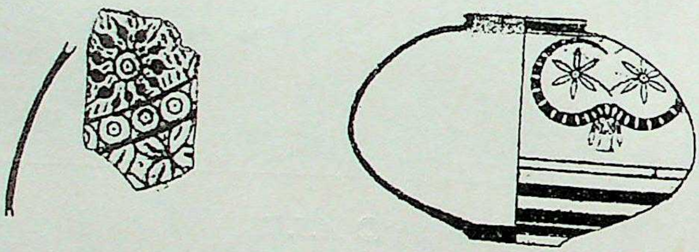

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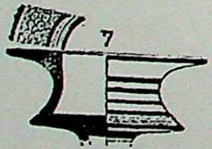
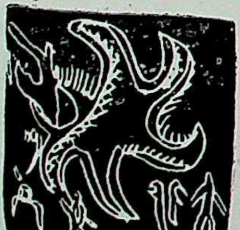


FIG. 2b



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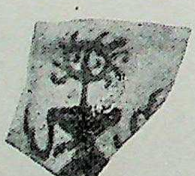

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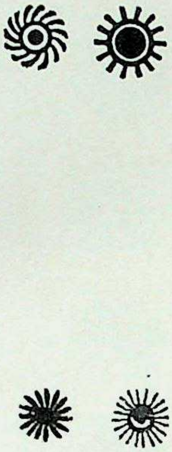

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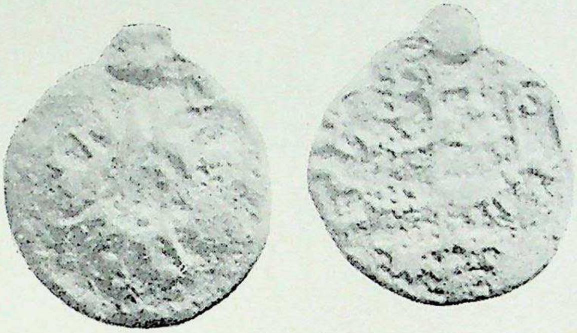

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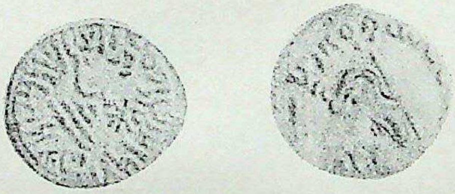

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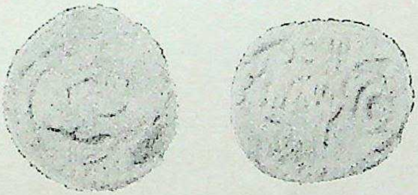

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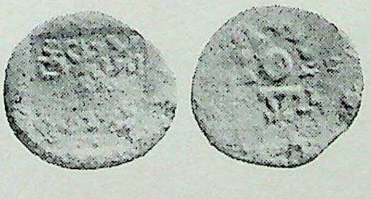

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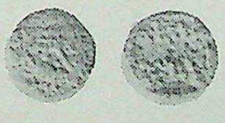

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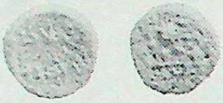

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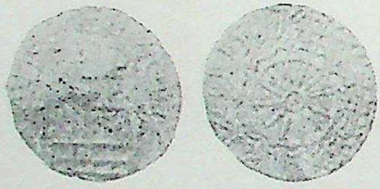

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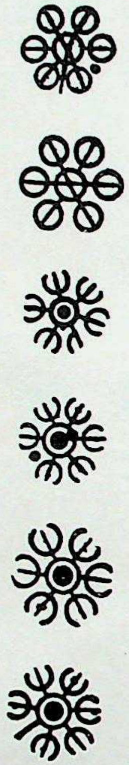

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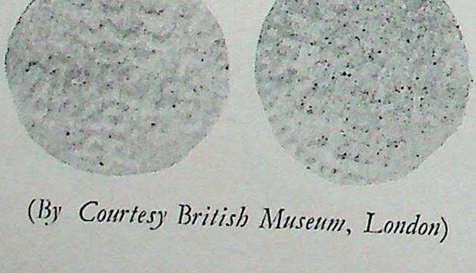

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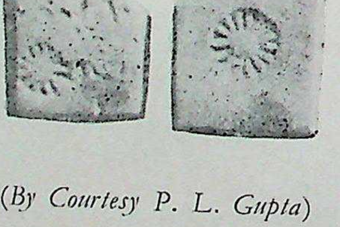

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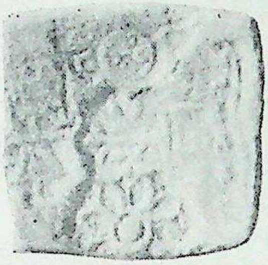

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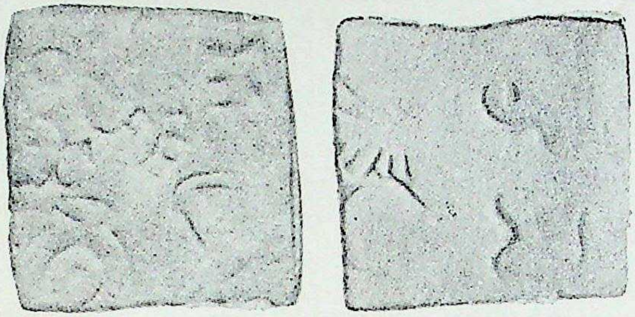

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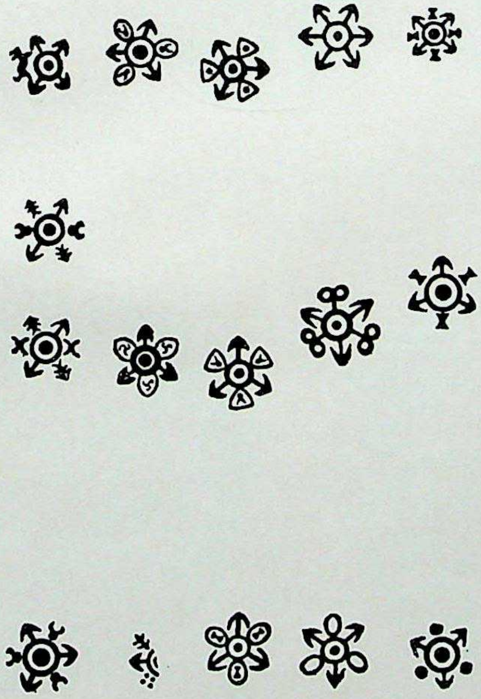

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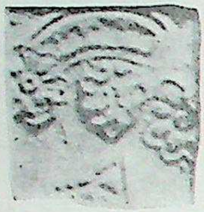

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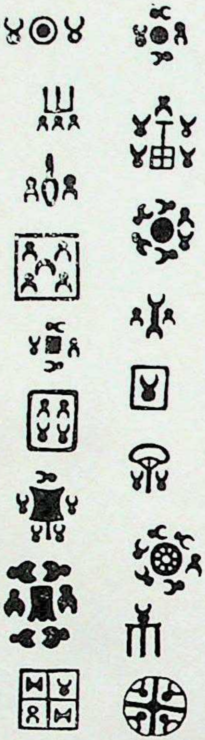

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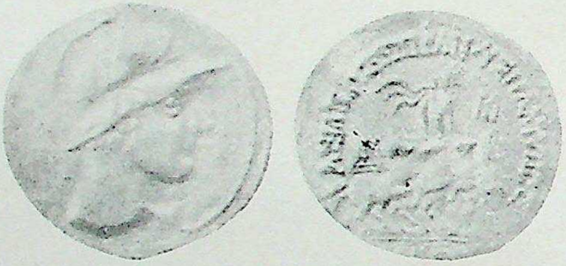

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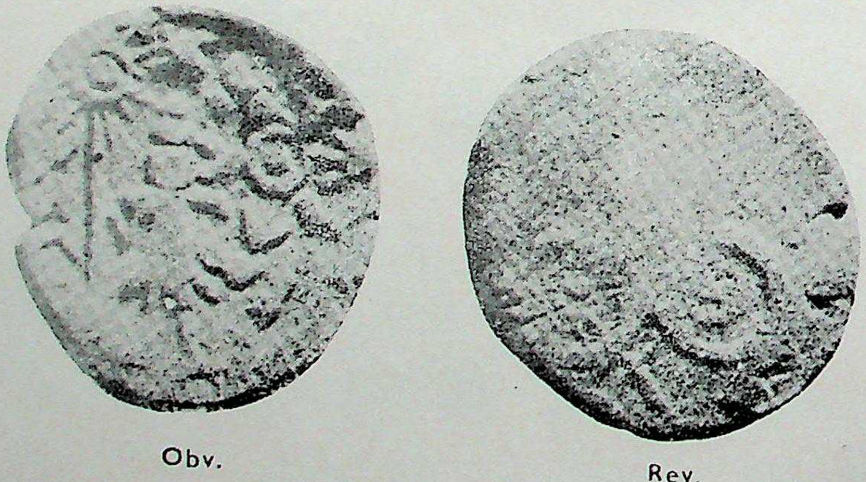

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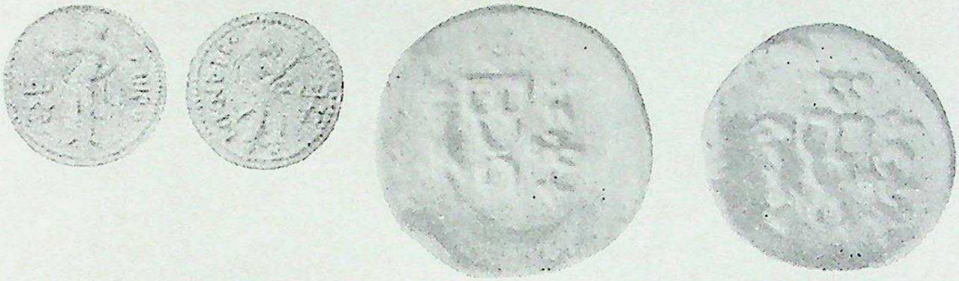
Pl. 5c

(The Sun-god on Kuṣāṇa Coin) (Helios on Plato's Coin)



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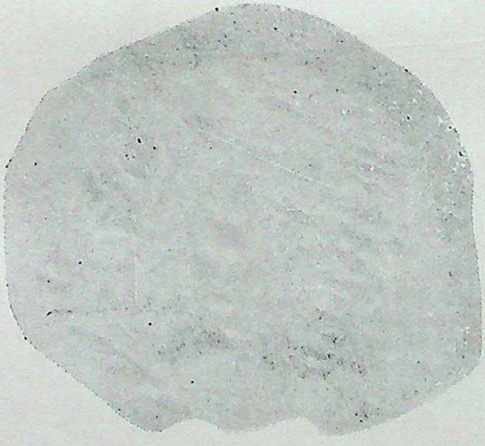

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Pl. 6b

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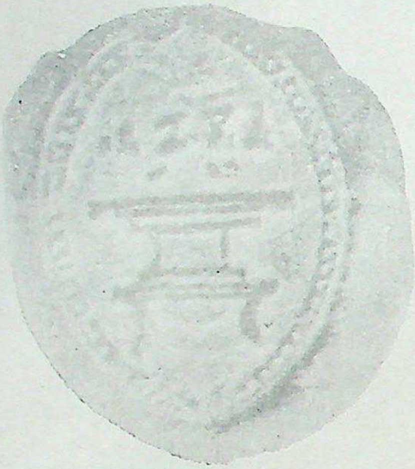

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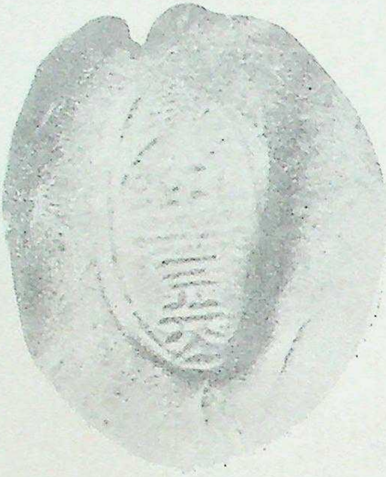

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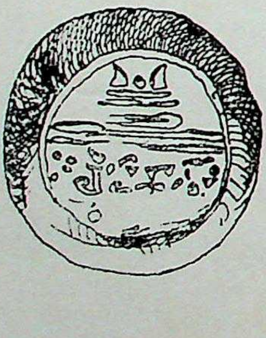
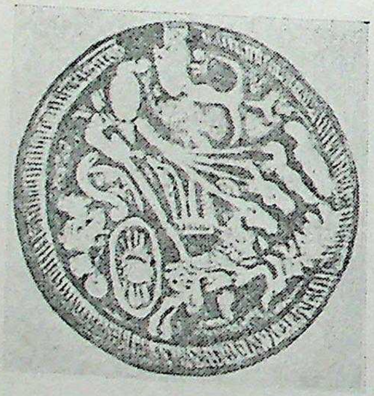


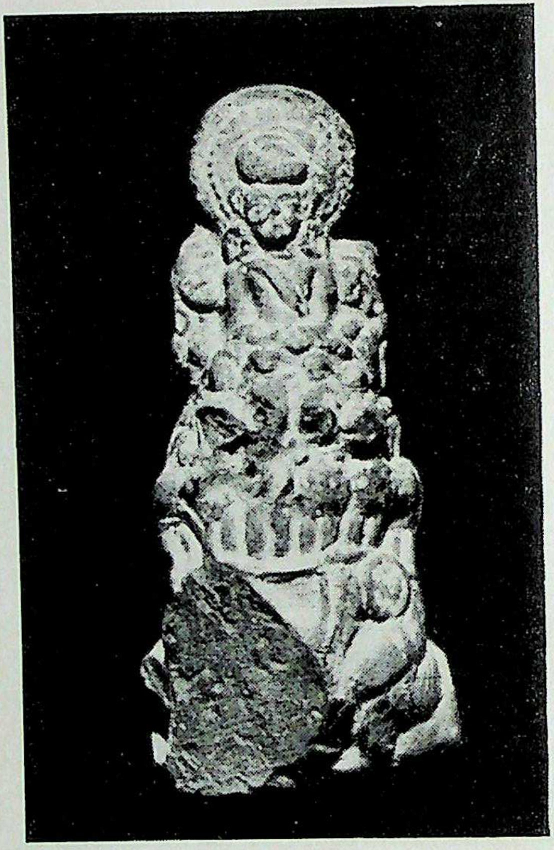
(*By Courtesy Numismatic Society of India*)

Pl. 7a



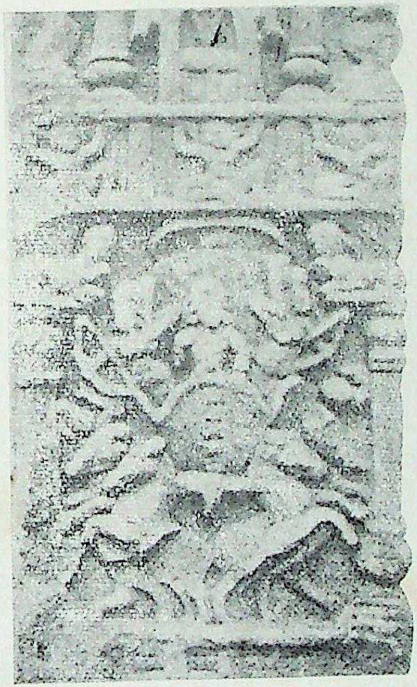
(*By Courtesy Patna Museum, Patna*)

Pl. 7b



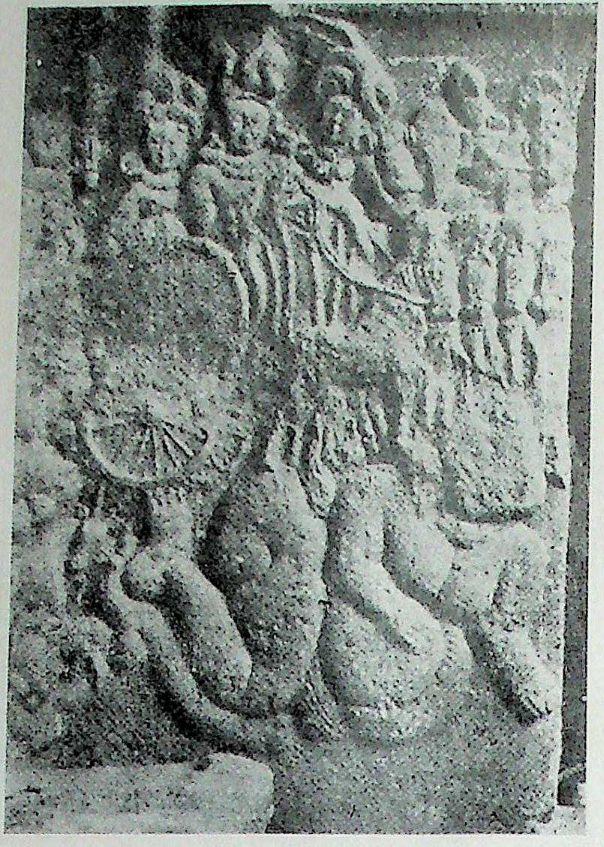
(*By Courtesy Asutosh Museum*)

Pl. 8a



(*By Courtesy* © *A.S.I.*)

Pl. 9a

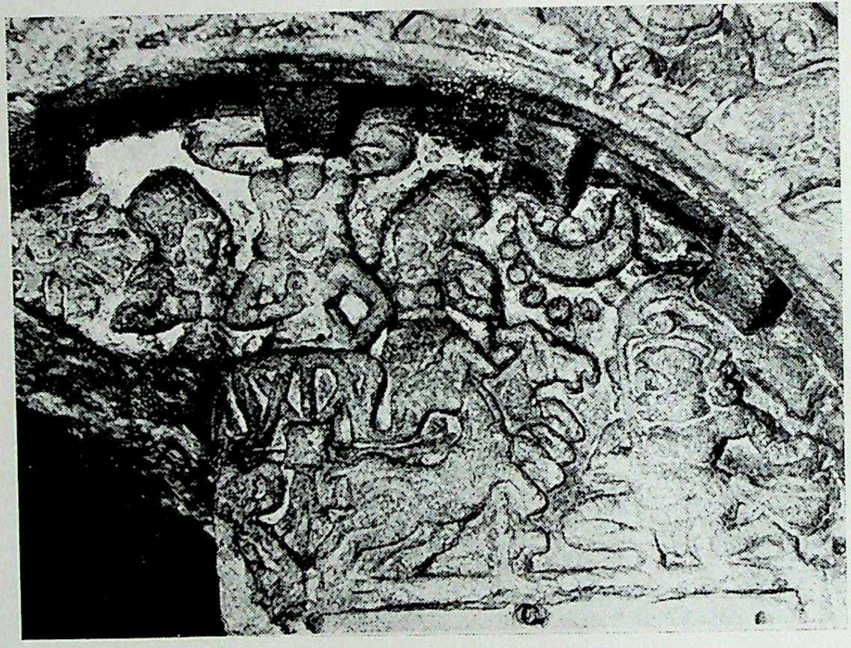


(*By Courtesy* © *A.S.I.*)

Pl. 9b

(*By Courtesy* © *A.S.I.*)

Pl. 10a



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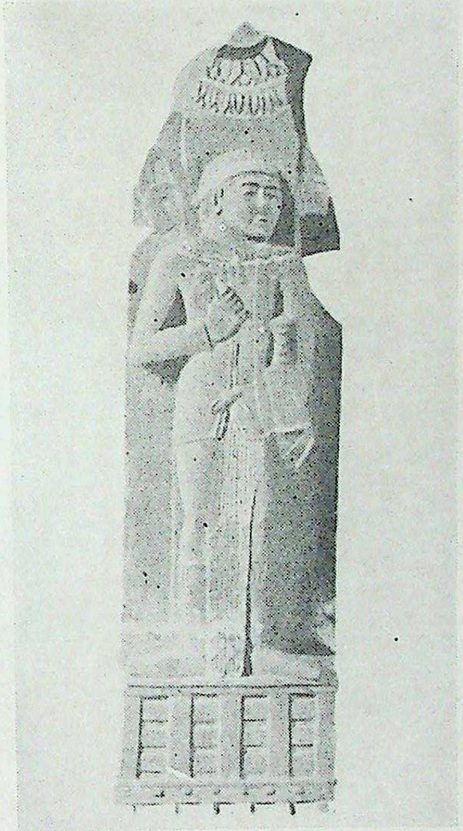
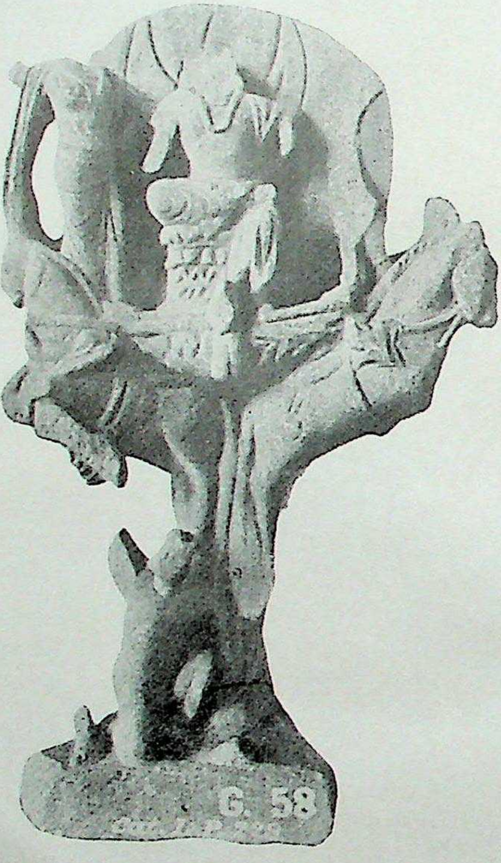
Pl. 10b



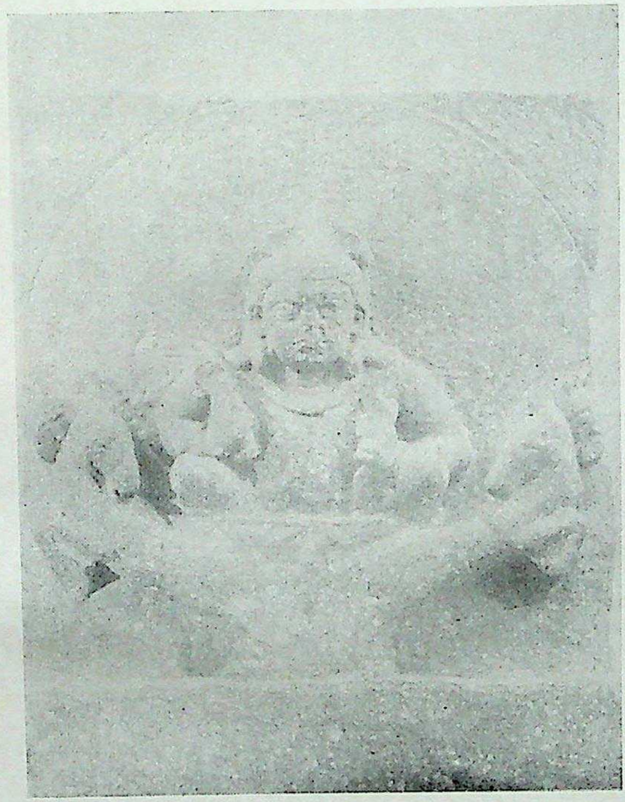
(*From 'Bharhut'*)

Pl. 11a



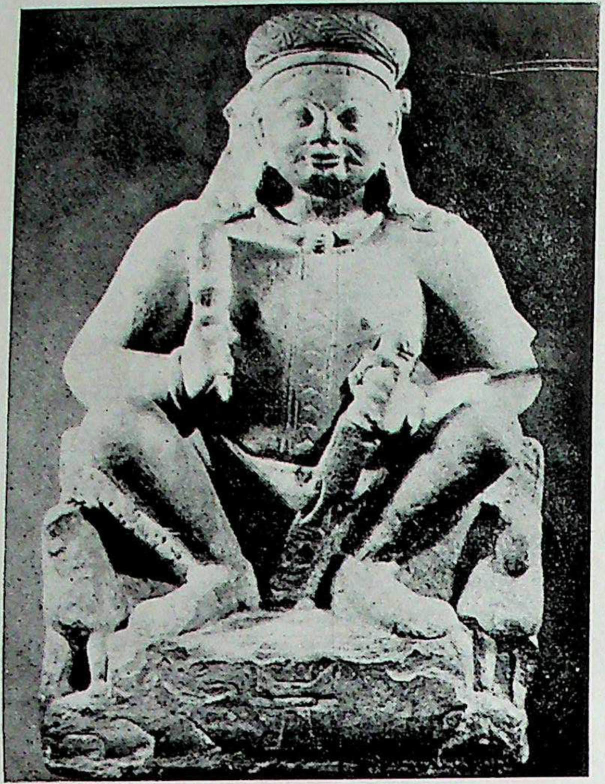
(*By Courtesy Indian Museum, Calcutta*)

Pl. 11b



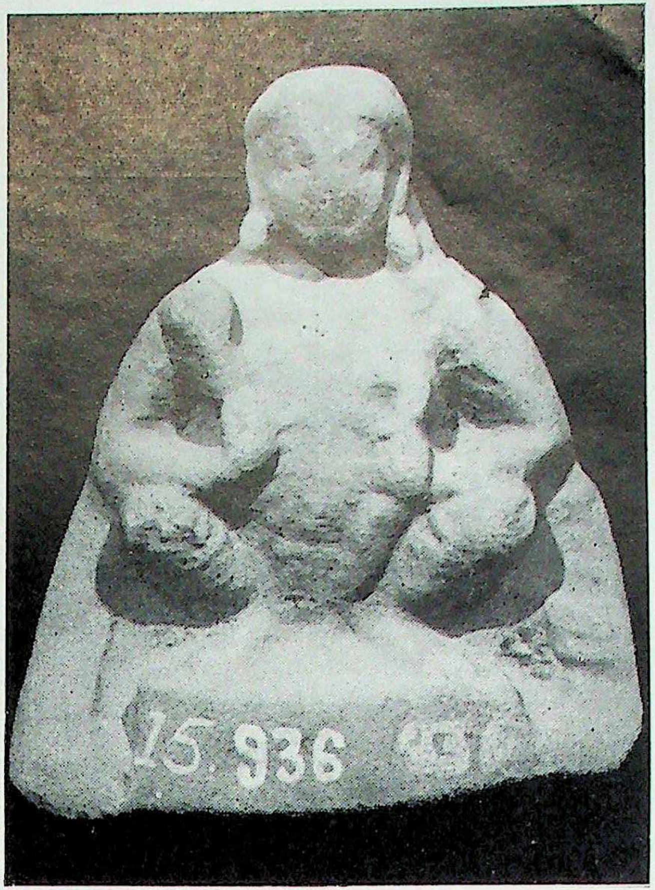
(*By Courtesy Mathura Museum*)

Pl. 12a



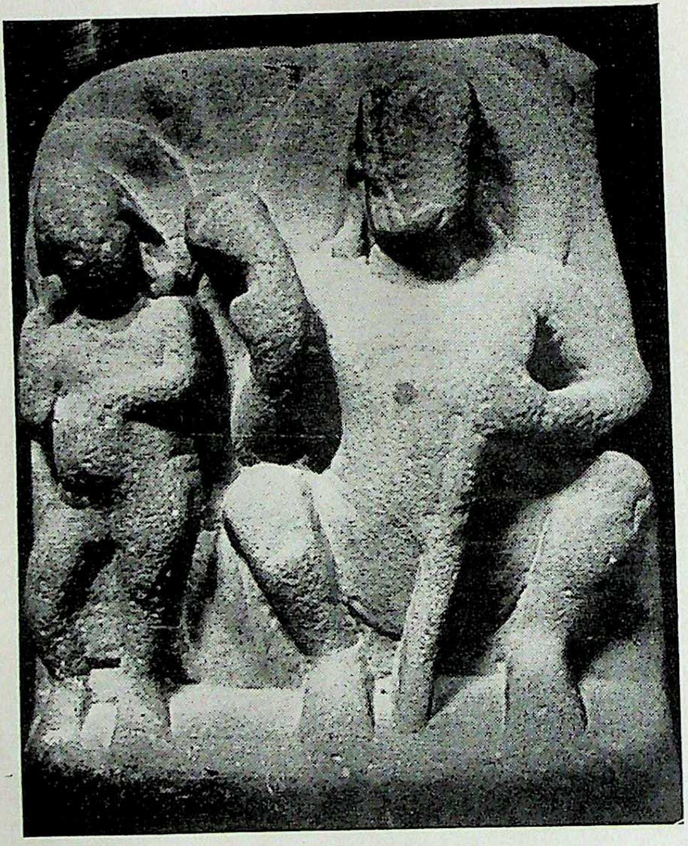
(By *Courtesy Mathura Museum*)

Pl. 12b



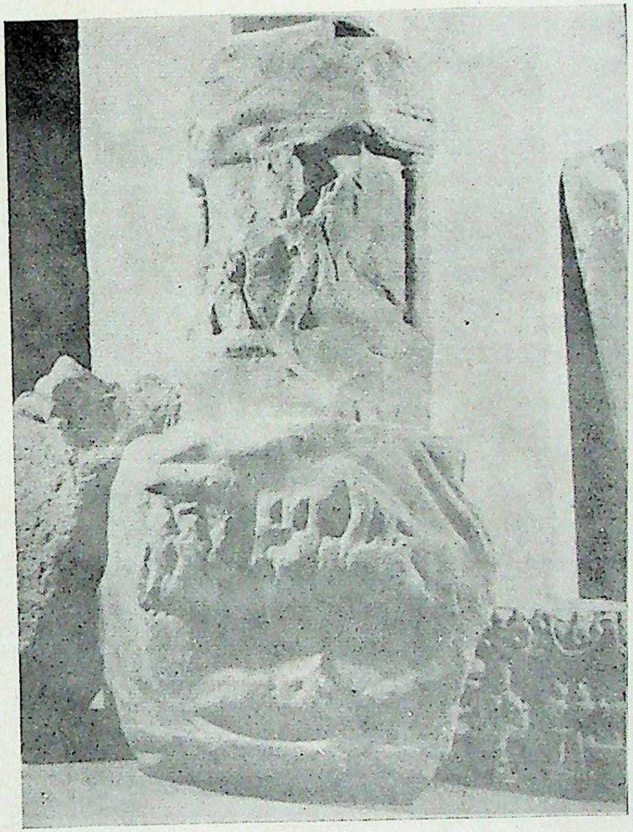
(By *Couretesy Mathura Museum*)

Pl. 13a



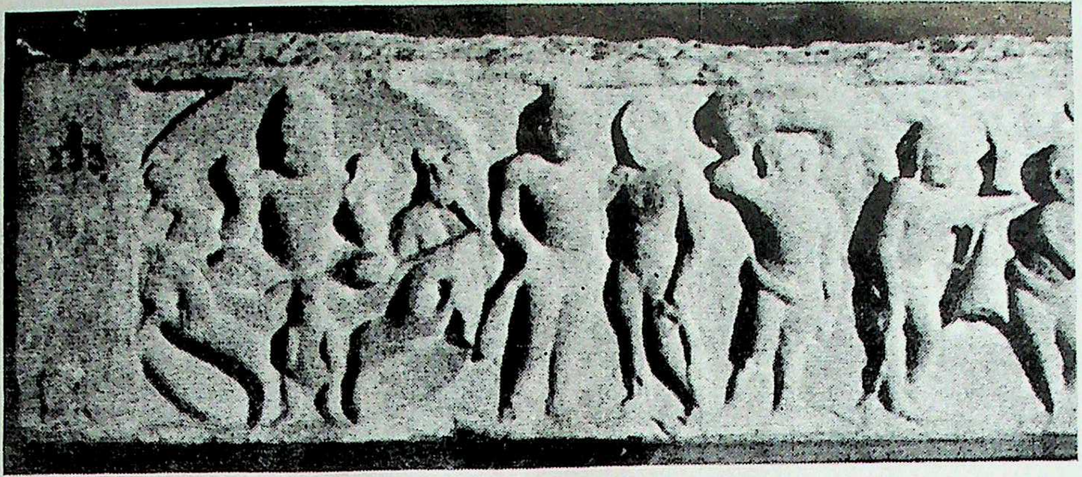
(*By Courtesy, Mathura Museum*)

Pl. 13b



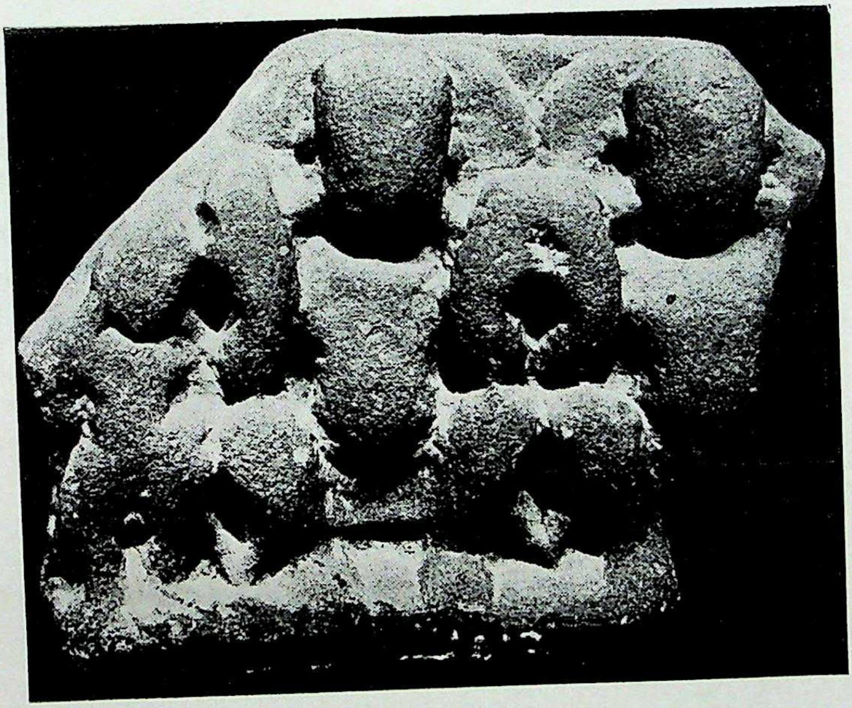
(*By Courtesy Mathura Museum*)

Pl. 14a



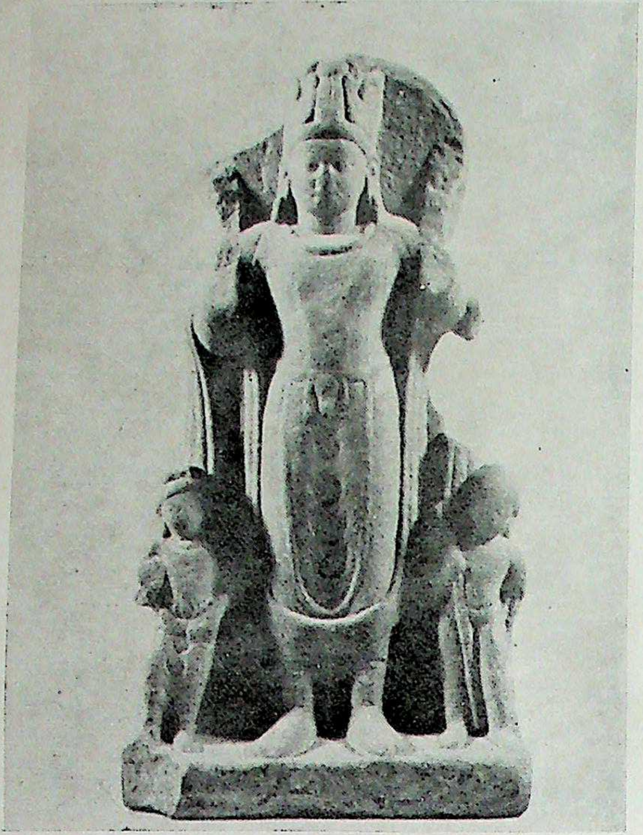
(*By Courtesy Lucknow Museum*)

Pl. 14b



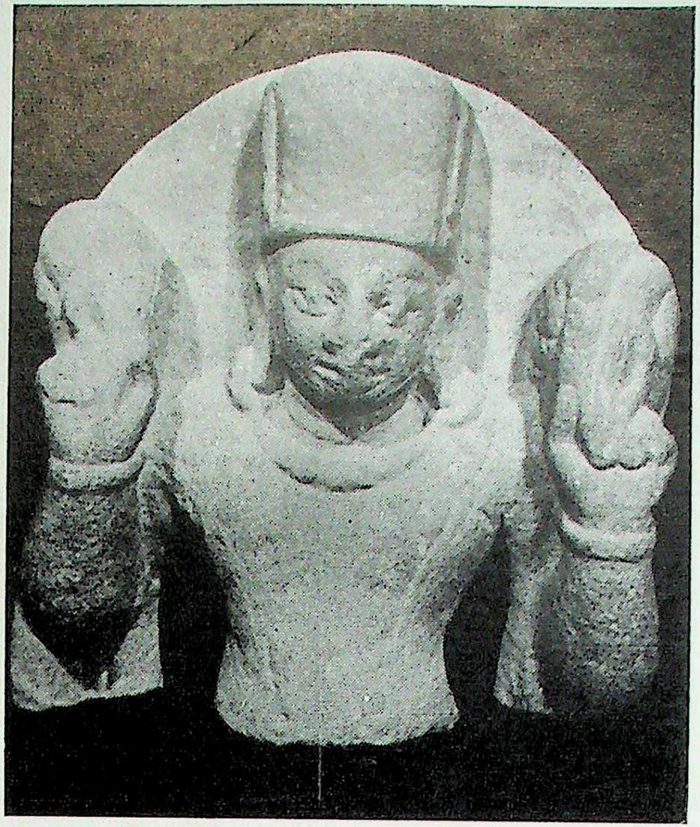
(*By Courtesy Mathura Museum*)

Pl. 15a



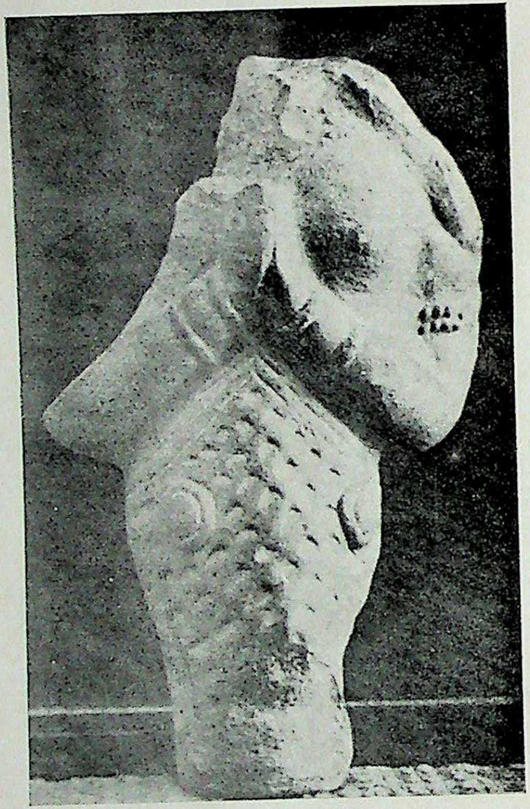
(*By Courtesy Mathura Museum*)

Pl. 15b



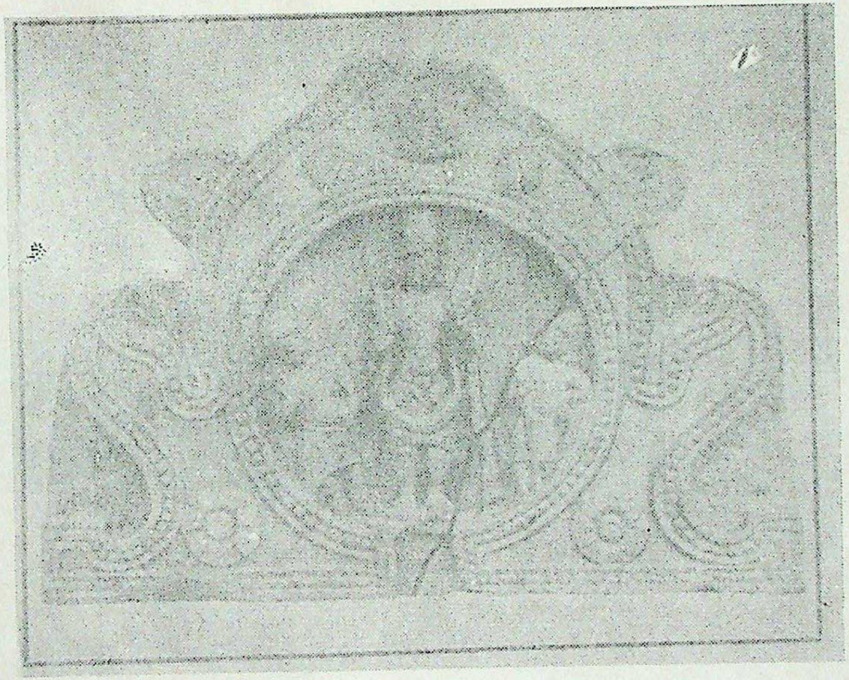
(*By Courtesy Mathura Museum*)

Pl. 16a



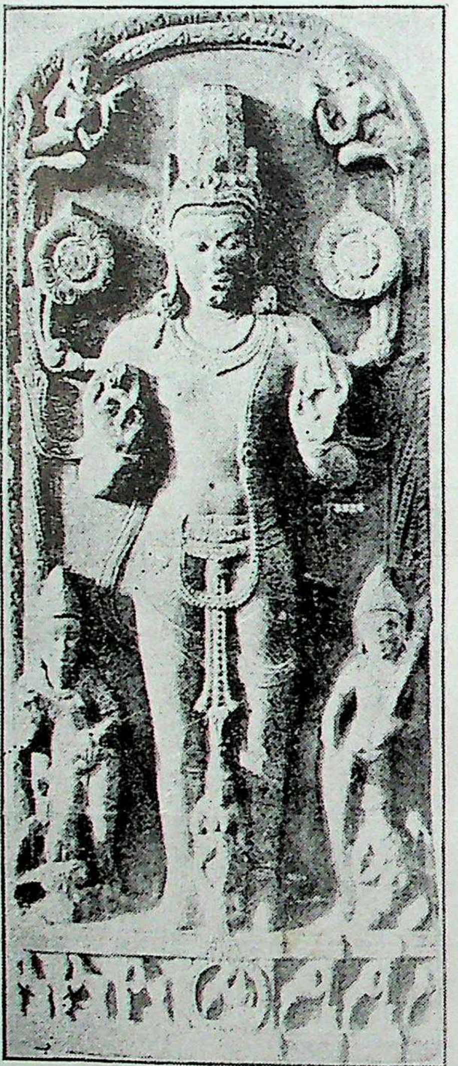
(*By Courtesy Mathura Museum*)

Pl. 16b



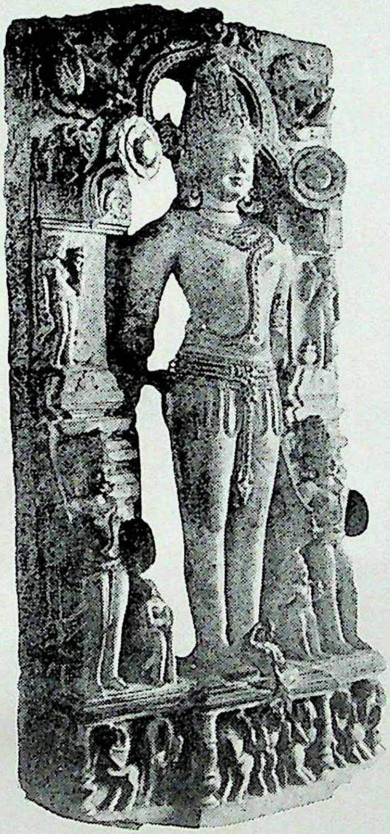
(*By Courtesy* © *A.S.I.*)

Pl. 17a



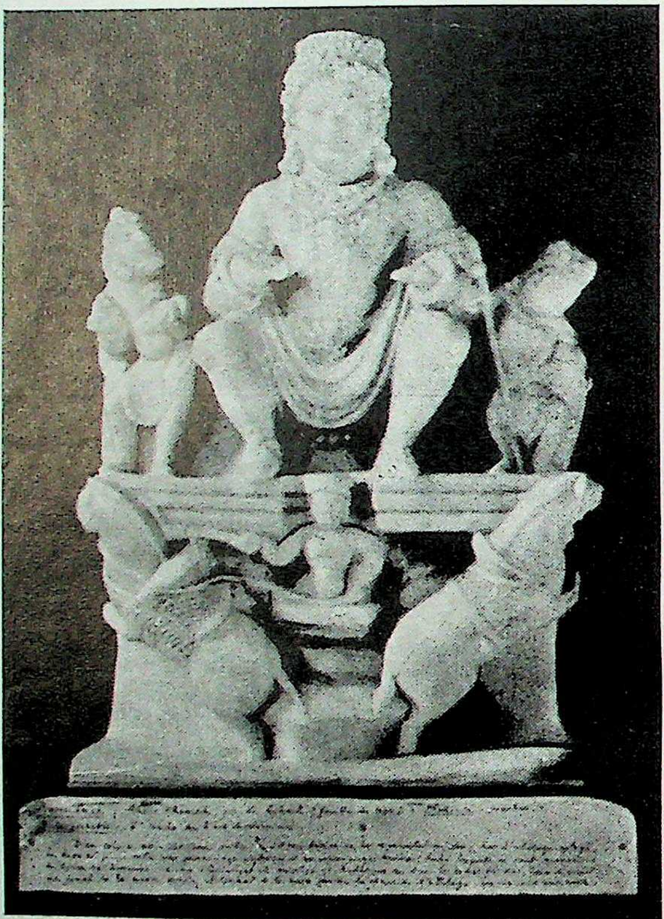
(By Courtesy Indian Museum Calcutta)

Pl. 17b



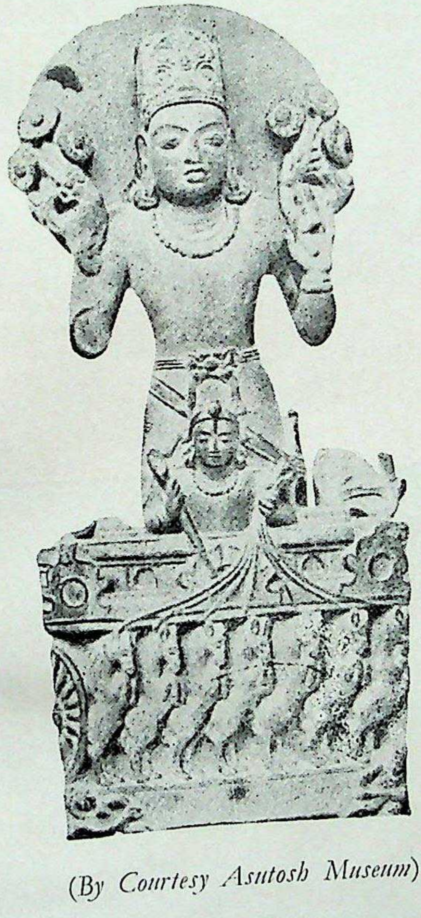
(*By Courtesy Life Magazine Time Inc. New York*)

PL. 18a



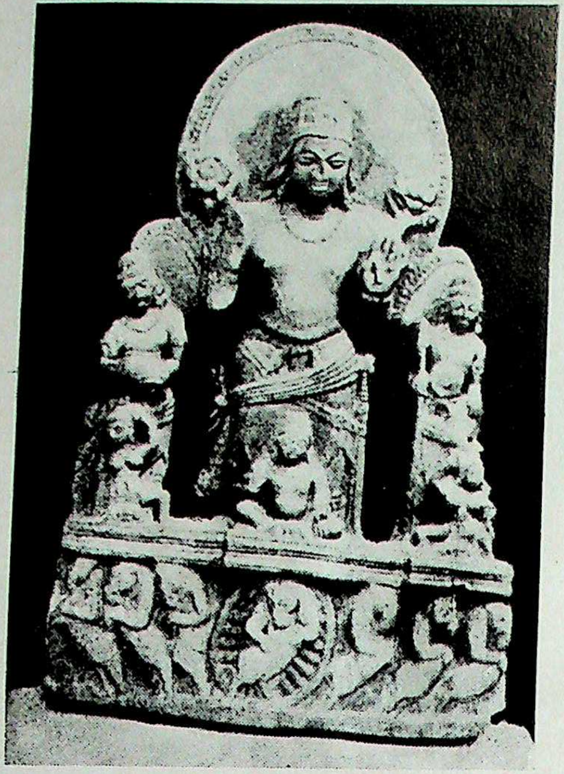
(*From J.I.S.O.A. Vol. XVI*)

Pl. 19a



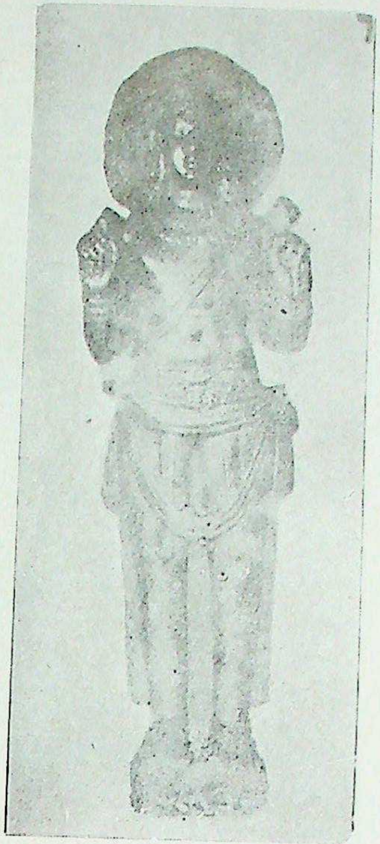
(*By Courtesy Asutosh Museum*)

Pl. 19b



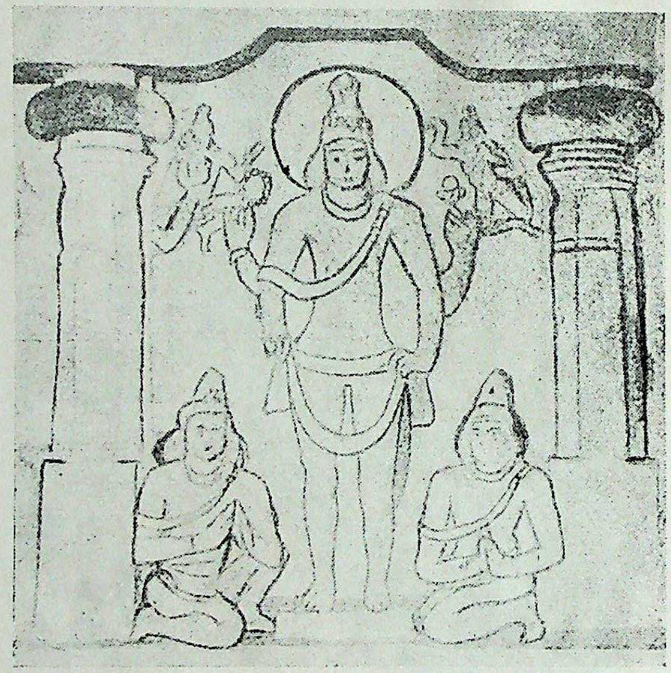
(*By Courtesy Asutosh Museum*)

Pl. 20a



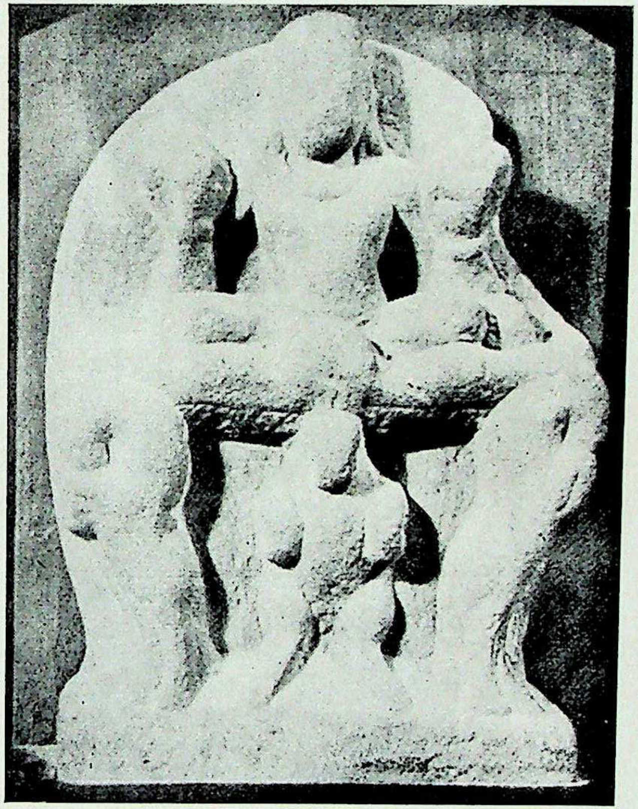
(*From Rao's E. H. I.*)

Pl. 20b



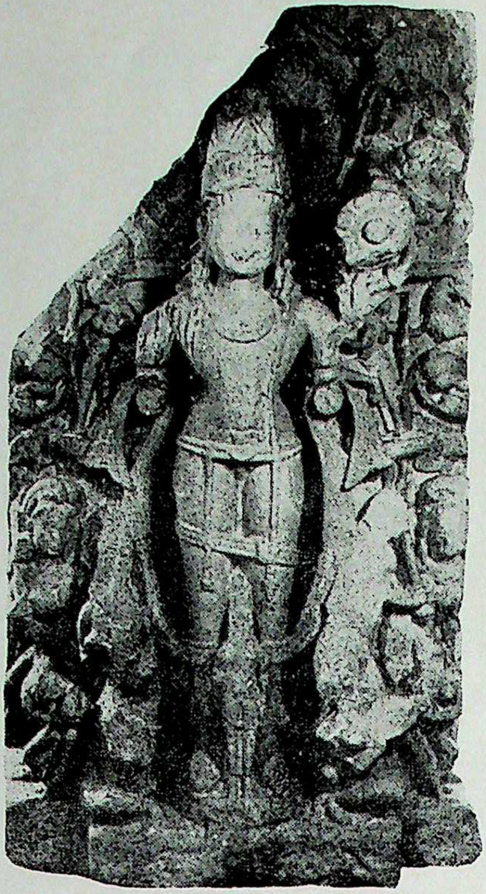
(*From Dubruil's Iconography of Southern India*)

Pl. 21a



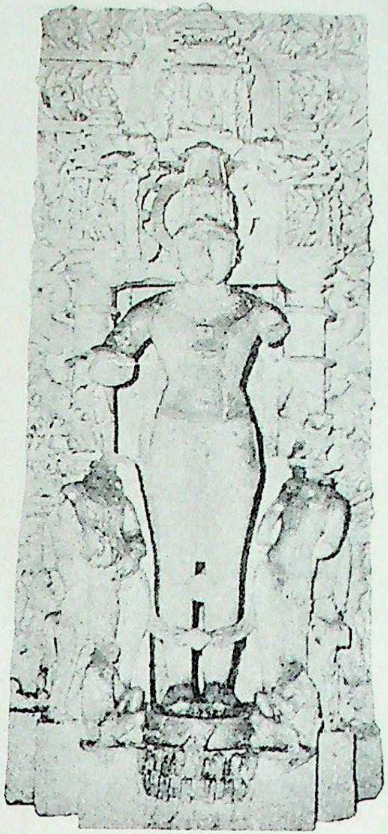
(*By Courtesy Mathura Museum*)

Pl. 21b



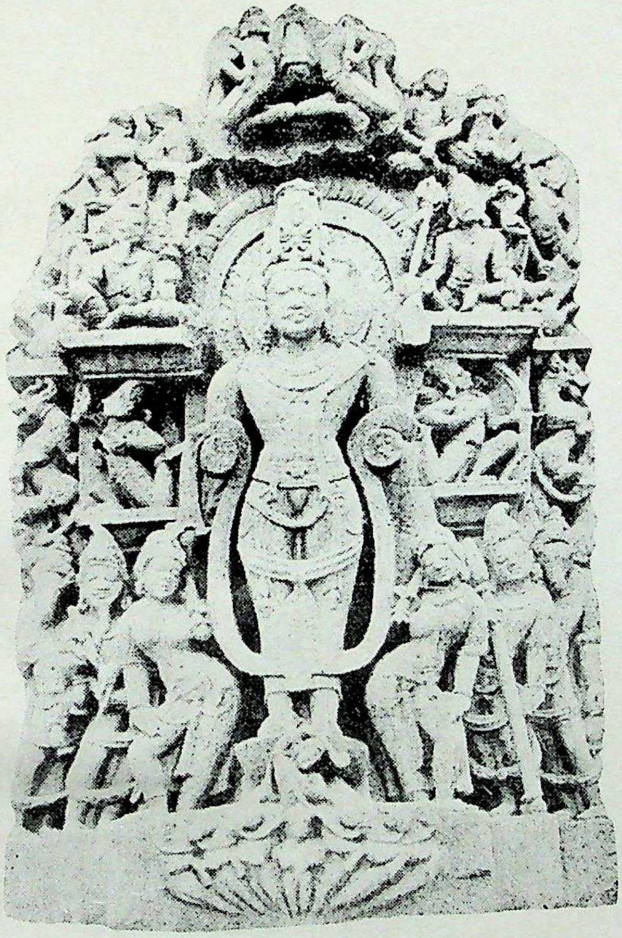
(*By Courtesy Mathura Museum*)

Pl. 22a



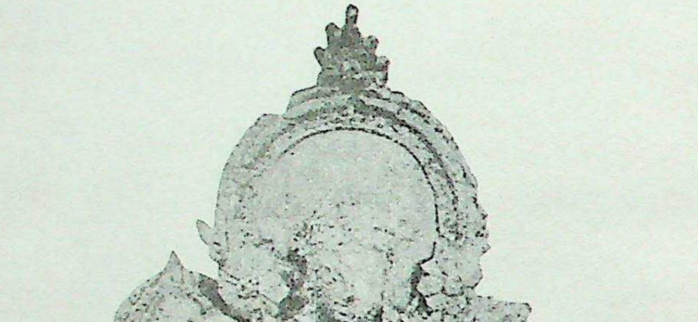
(*By Courtesy © A.S.I.*)

Pl. 22b



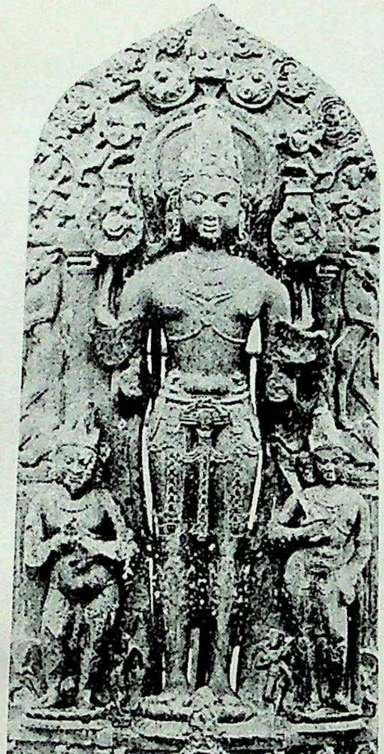
(*By Courtesy* R. *M.P.Govt.*)

Pl. 23a



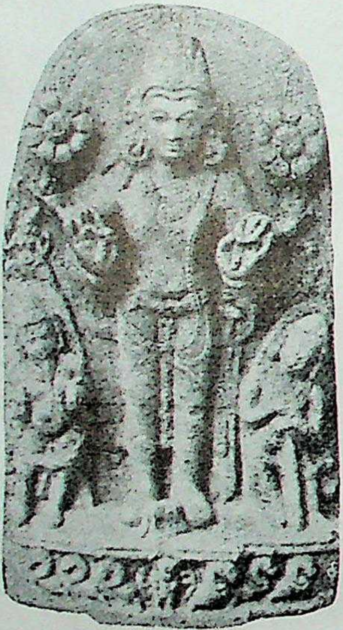
(*By Courtesy Dacca Museum*)

PL. 23b



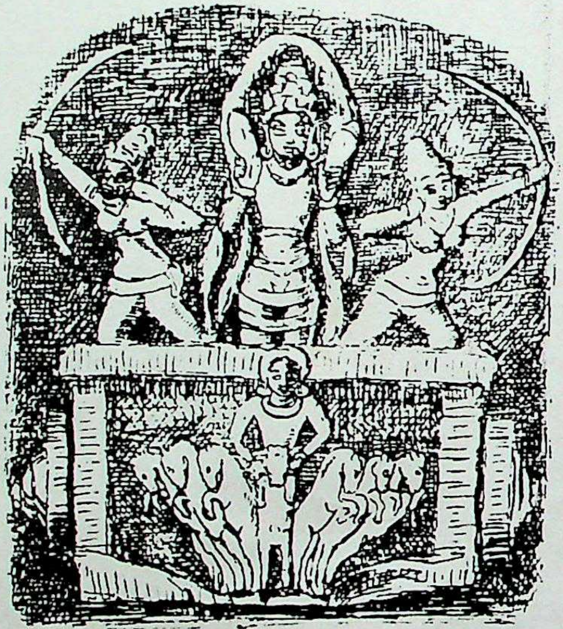
(*By Courtesy Dacca Museum*)

Pl. 24a



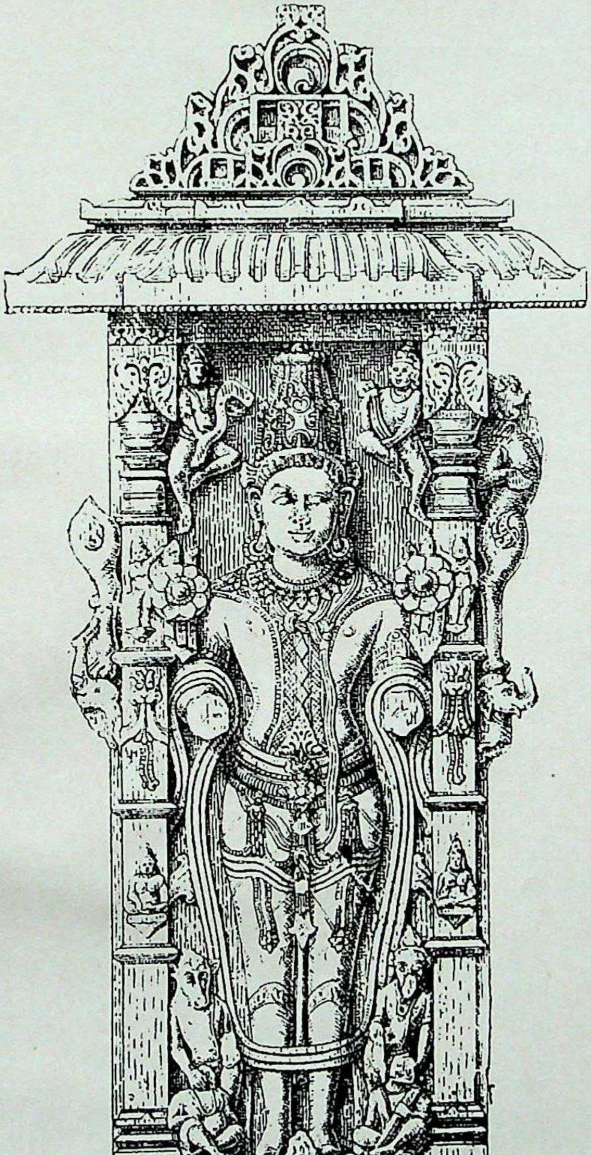
(*By Courtesy* © *A.S.I.*)

Pl. 24b



(*From Rao's E.H.I.*)

Pl. 25a



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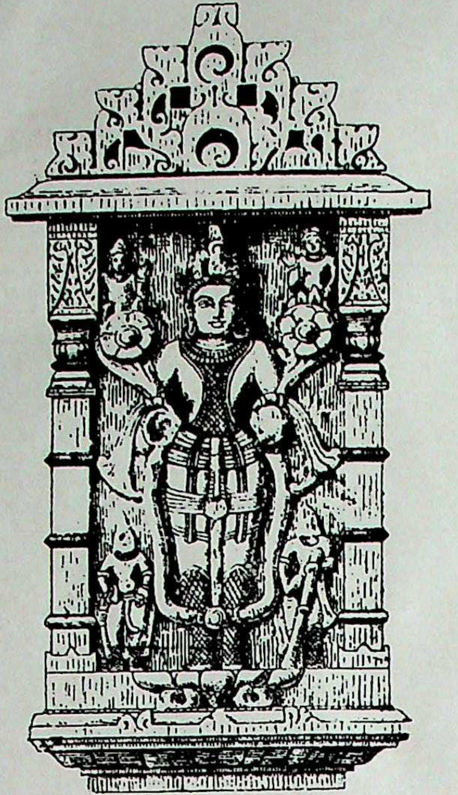
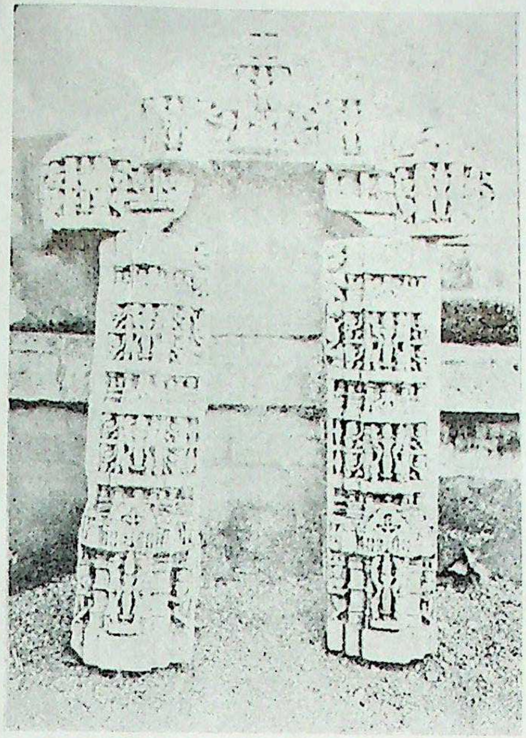
Pl. 25b



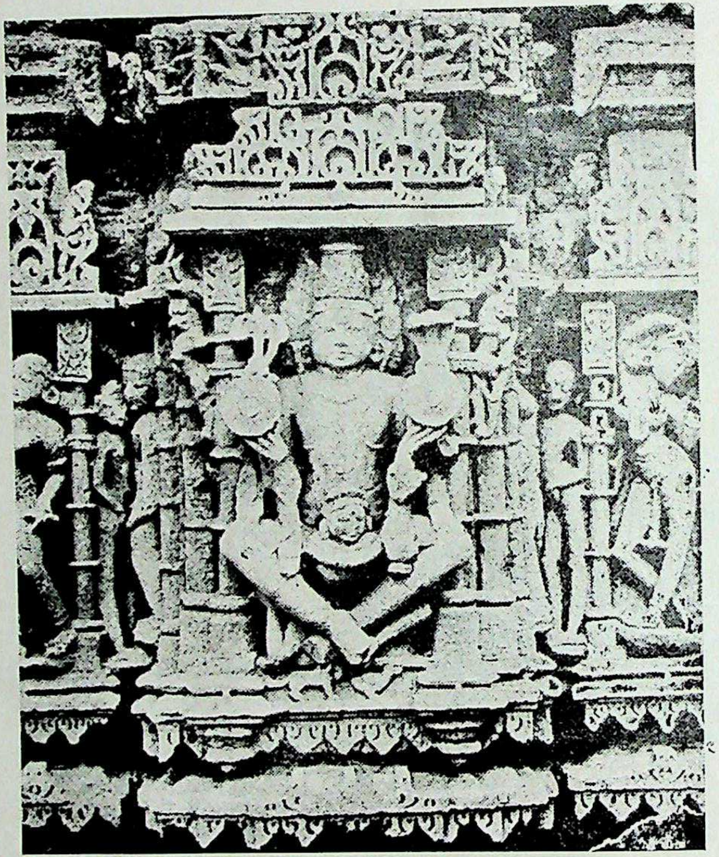
(*By Courtesy* © *A.S.I.*)

Pl. 26a



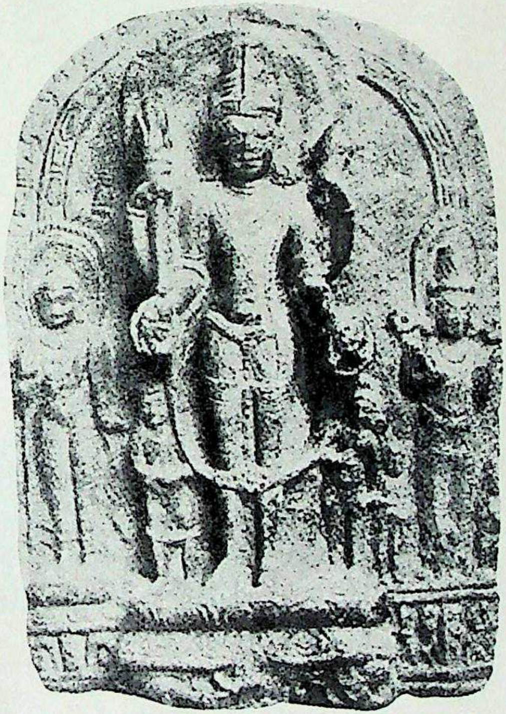
(*From* Rao's E.H.I.)

Pl. 26b



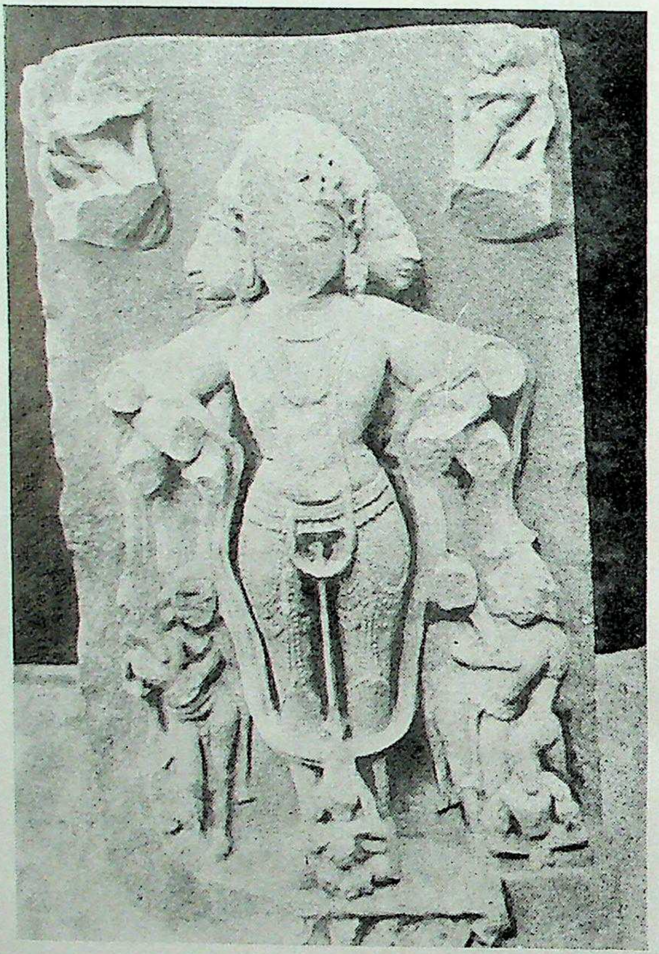
(*By Courtesy A.S.I.*)

Pl. 27a(ii)



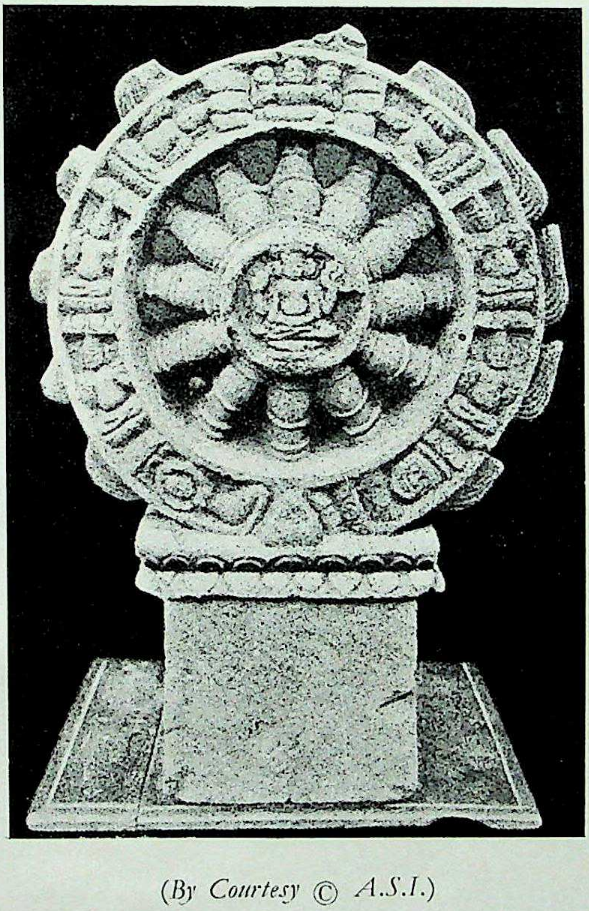
(*By Courtesy Indian Museum Calcutta*)

Pl. 27a



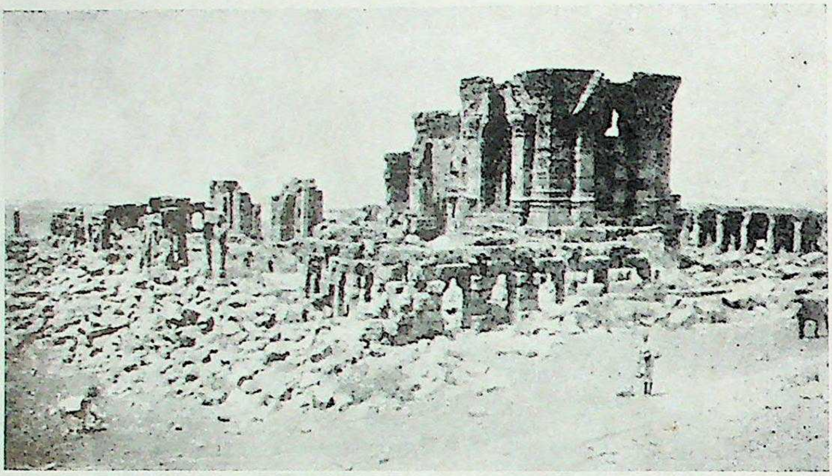
(*From I.A.* 1918)

Pl. 27b



(By Courtesy © A.S.I.)

Pl. 28a



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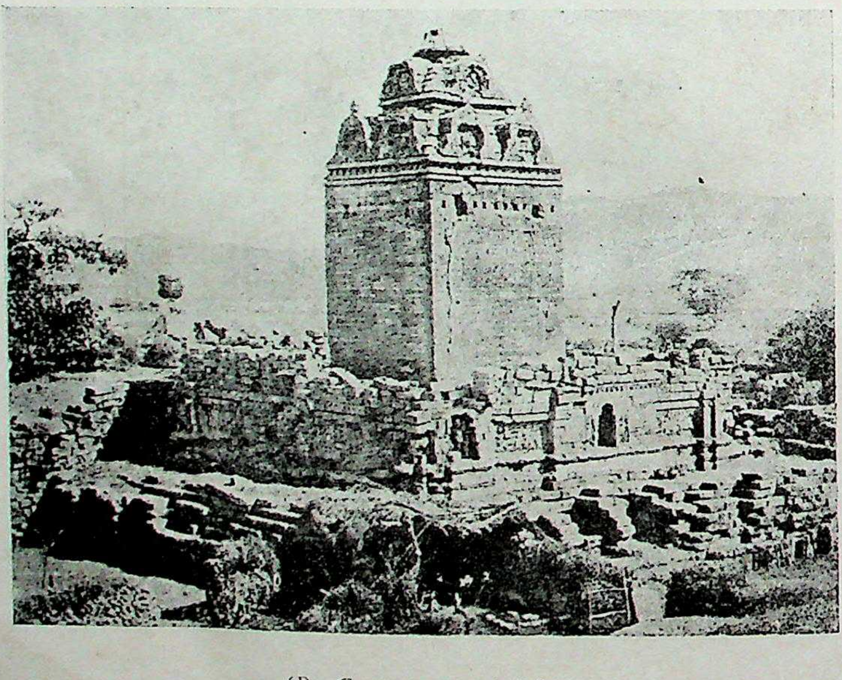
Pl. 28b



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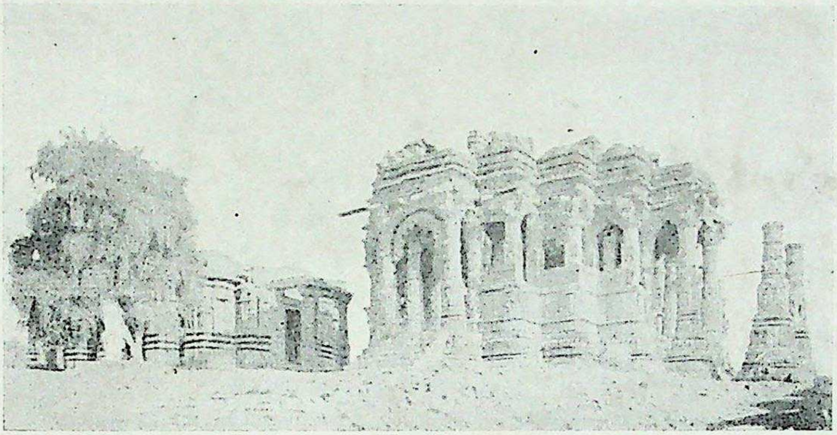
Pl. 29a



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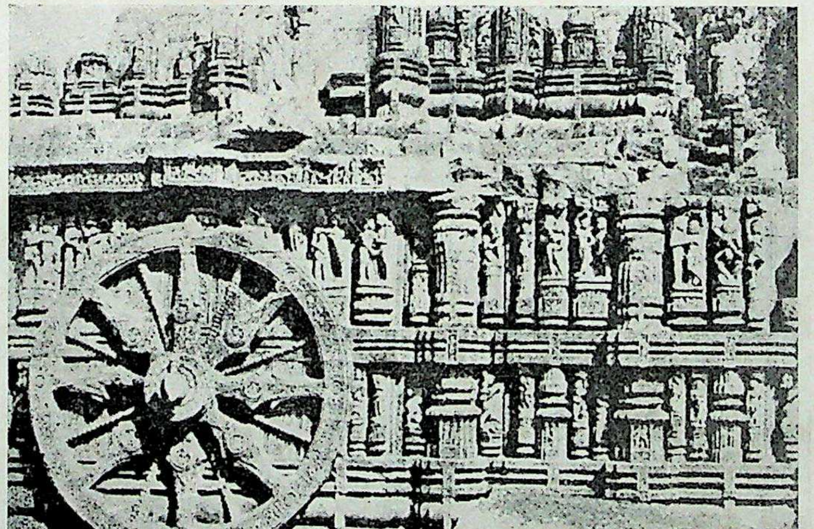
Pl. 29b



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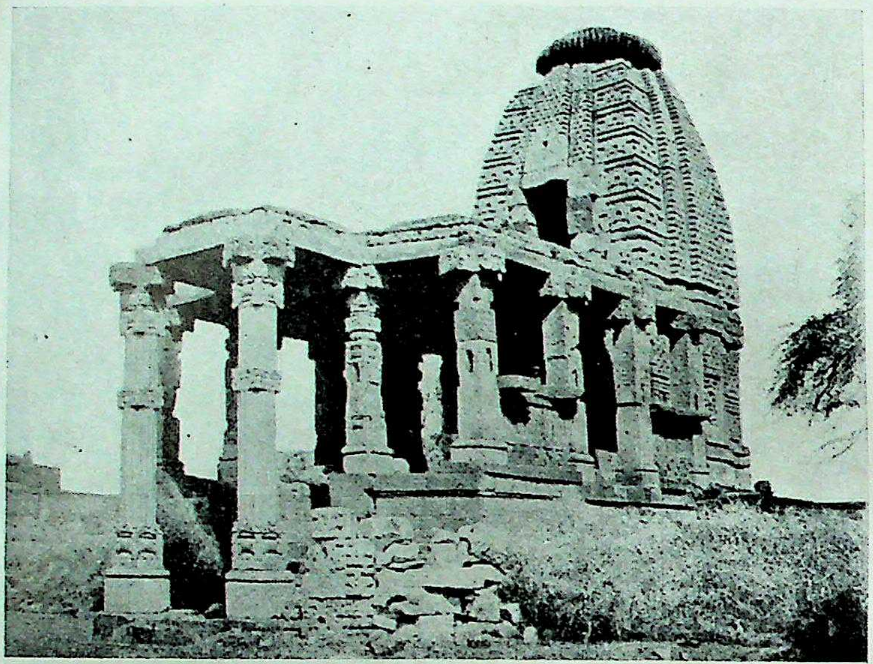
Pl. 30a



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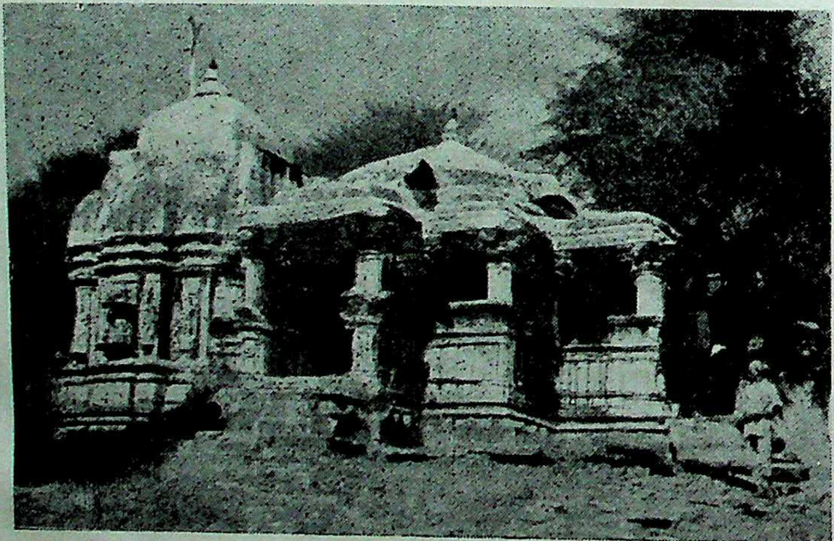
Pl. 30b



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